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REMAINS

OF

REV. JOSHUA WELLS DOWNING, A. M.,

LATE OF THE NEW-ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR.

“In thy divine abode
Change finds no pathway, mem’ry no dark trace,
And, O! bright victory—death by love no place.”

EDITED BY

ELIJAH H. DOWNING, A. M.

NEW-YORK:

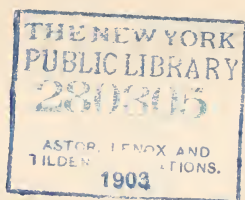
PUBLISHED BY G. LANE & P. P. SANDFORD,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE,
200 MULBERRY-STREET.

J. Collord, Printer.

1841.

H.S.



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TO THE

REV. ELIJAH HEDDING, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

THIS VOLUME,

THE WRITINGS OF ONE IN WHOSE FATHER'S FAMILY HE WAS EVER AN
INTIMATE AND HONOURED FRIEND,

IS INSCRIBED,

AS AN EXPRESSION OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

BY THE EDITOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE lamented author whose literary remains are here embodied neither designed nor prepared his writings for publication. They appear from the press in compliance with the wishes of those who received the word of life from his lips during the brief period of his ministry; and in the fulfilment of what the editor has felt to be a sacred duty devolving on him since the decease of his beloved brother. It is difficult, as must be evident to the reader, to prepare for publication the manuscripts of one who is no more; and whatever may be the care bestowed on a posthumous work, it must appear with imperfections. In the selection and preparation of the sermons and other writings which constitute the present volume, the editor has laboured under an almost painful sense of his responsibility—under the pressure of feeble health and afflictive circumstances; he has done the best he could, and now submits the work in the

humble expectation that, with the blessing of God, it will prove not to have been labour in vain.

For valuable assistance in the revision of the following pages, the editor is indebted to the kindness of his esteemed friend, the Rev. Edward Otheman.

New-York, October, 1841.

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REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JOSHUA WELLS DOWNING, A. M.

MEMOIR.

IN laying before the public this selection from the writings of a departed brother, it may be proper that I should give a brief and unadorned view of his life and death. It would not become me to dwell on his character, and little can be said in sketching the progress of a career which has so soon ended. His life was, comparatively, but a life of promise. He was taken away, as many, alas, have been, in the bright morning of his days, and the short space of four years witnessed the commencement and the close of his ministerial labours.

JOSHUA WELLS DOWNING was born in Lynn, Mass., March 5, 1813. His parents were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church: they are now no more. It may be truly said of them, that their lives were in unison with their Christian profession; they exerted a happy influence over the circles in which they moved, and, as Christian parents, sought by their prayers and pious instructions to lead their children with them in the path to heaven. Of those children, eight in number, five died in infancy; the writer of this sketch is now the only survivor. The November following his birth, Joshua was

bereft of his mother. The loss of a mother is, to her surviving offspring, whether in their early or more mature years, one of the most severe and afflictive bereavements. Who can guide them "in the slippery paths of youth," shield them from the evils which are in the world, and lead them to the Saviour, like a pious mother? In the present instance, however, that mother's place was supplied, in the order of a kind Providence, by another, who is still living.

In September, 1830, at the age of seventeen, Joshua became a student of Brown University. At that time it was his expectation, on leaving college, to devote himself to the profession of law; but his views and feelings in regard to all earthly pursuits were soon after very materially changed. He had connected himself as a teacher with one of the Methodist sabbath schools in Providence, and it was while endeavouring to teach his class the truths pertaining to salvation, that he himself was taught of God. He now saw and felt his insufficiency for the responsible work in which he had engaged. He could not, he reflected, teach that of which he himself was ignorant; and if a personal interest in Christ was of importance to others, it was, he justly reasoned, of no less importance to himself. He was led by the Holy Spirit to view his guilt and danger while unreconciled to God; he sought the pardon of his sins, and, in penitence and faith, was enabled to give himself to the Saviour in an everlasting covenant. Not long after, he made a public profession of his faith in Christ, and was admitted to the Methodist church in Providence, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. D. Kilburn. From this time his course was "onward and upward." True, doubts and fears pursued him far on his way; but they could not retard his progress. It was manifest to the brethren with whom he was associated that he was growing in grace,

and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour. For a view of his Christian experience, and for his own expression of his thoughts and feelings before and after entering the ministry, the reader is referred to the extracts from his letters in this volume.

In the second year of his collegiate course he was called to mourn the loss of an affectionate and only sister, Mrs. Mary D. Pool. Death's sad messenger had not entered our dwelling since he took away our mother; and we were then too young to know the dreadful nature of his commission, or to remember his visit. While we were fondly hoping that our little circle would remain unbroken for many a year to come, one of our number declined and died. We never knew before what it is to part with one endeared to us by every tie of kindred and affection. We could not but feel, when forced to part with Mary;—she was an only sister, and when she died, we suffered the agonies of a *first bereavement*. Yet we rejoiced in the assurance that it was to her a happy change.

“They that saw her look in death,
No more may fear to die!”

My brother was graduated September 3, 1834. His Commencement Oration is placed in the present collection. He received his second degree in course, September, 1837.

His duty in regard to entering the Christian ministry had been to him, from the time of his conversion, a subject of anxious reflection and fervent prayer. And well it might have been. The question, Does the Saviour require me to preach the gospel? is one of solemn and momentous import. The interests of the individual for time and for eternity are affected by its decision. Satisfied at length that it was his duty to become a minister of Christ, he joined the New-England Conference at its session in

Lynn, June, 1835, and was stationed at Randolph, Mass. On account of the unfriendly disposition manifested by the society in that place to the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, after a few months he was removed by his presiding elder (Rev. B. Otheman) to Salem, Mass. He was stationed at the latter place at the following session of the conference in 1836. At the conference of 1837 he was ordained to the office of deacon, and was again stationed at Salem. Our brethren in that city were involved, and had been for a long season, in difficulties and trials such as have seldom fallen to the lot of their sister churches. This rendered his situation, during the two and a half years of his pastoral connection with them, one of anxiety and toil. Yet he was sustained and encouraged by the assurance, that his labours were not in vain in the Lord. The Head of the church smiled on his efforts, and many souls were given him as seals of his ministry.

At the conference of 1838 he was appointed to the charge of the church in Broomfield-street, Boston, one of the largest and oldest of the Methodist churches in New-England. During his ministry in Boston, he held a high place in the esteem and affections of the people, and we have reason to rejoice in the reflection that he was rendered to them a blessing.

After receiving his appointment as pastor of Broomfield-street church, he was married, in July, 1838, to Miss Mary Ann Mudge, of Lynn. It was a happy union ; alas, that it was to be of so short duration !

The following month he was called to suffer another distressing bereavement, and, to him, *the last*. Death again found his way to our family, and we were left to mourn the removal of our affectionate and beloved father. For several of the latter years of his life he had sustained the relation of a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and it was his delight to preach "the un-

searchable riches of Christ." He died August 14, 1838, happy and triumphant.

At the conference of 1839 my brother was ordained to the office of elder, and was returned to the Broomfield-street church. This brings us to the closing scene of his ministry and life.

His health, which was constitutionally feeble, had been for some time sinking under labours which he had not the strength to sustain. During the session of the conference he was actively engaged in the discharge of the duties assigned him as a member of that body. Love for the cause of Christ seemed to urge him on, while his pallid countenance and emaciated frame were the sad indications that he was not long to be spared to his brethren and to the church. At the close of the session, he was intending to travel for a few weeks, in the hope that rest and a change of scene might tend to the restoration of his health. But while making the arrangements for his journey, he was attacked by hemorrhage of the lungs, and was soon laid on his bed of sickness. It was not the privilege of the writer to be with his dear brother during the last trying scene, nor for many months previous; the letters he has received, however, from those who were with him, bear witness to the Christian calmness and resignation with which he finished his course. The summons to die came when he looked not for it, but, through the grace given unto him, it found him prepared. Most earnestly did he desire to live, it is true; it was not, however, that he feared to die, but that he might labour a little longer in the vineyard of his blessed Master.

"During the whole of his sickness," says his bereaved companion, in a letter written soon after his death, "he expressed a strong desire to recover, *that he might be useful*. The thought of giving up preaching was very painful to him. It seemed to him, he at one time said to me, worse

than death. At another time he said, 'You know that I never preached for money nor for fame ; and it does not seem possible that the Lord will take me away now, just as I have *begun* to be useful, and when my whole soul is in the work.' He often said to me, 'If it were not for *you* and the *church* I could give up the thoughts of getting well very easily.' He had much faith in prayer, and was very anxious that his friends should pray that he might be raised up with health sufficient to preach the gospel. He took great delight in hearing the Bible read. 'There are two things,' he remarked to me one day, 'which have been very sweet to me.' I asked what they were. He replied, 'Secret prayer, and hearing you read from the Bible, especially the Psalms ; it seems as though they were written for me.' After his last attack of hemorrhage, which was very severe, I asked him to tell me in a few words (upon the slate) how he felt in regard to himself. He wrote, 'Sometimes think that I must die : generally think I shall be raised up again—better than ever. Am not ready to die, but feel a calmness about it truly wonderful. Have no doubt but that I love God.' He had several severe temptations during his sickness, but they were of short continuance, and he could generally say that he felt resigned and happy. He did not *feel* at any time that he should die. When informed on Sunday morning that he was dying, he said, 'It cannot be that I am dying ; it does not seem to me that my work is done ; yet I am perfectly willing, if it is the Lord's will.' He then addressed his physician, thanking him for his kind attentions, and exhorting him to be faithful in the service of God. 'Say the same in substance,' he continued, 'to Mr. — ; (a young man who had been very kind to him ;) beg him from me to repent and attend to the concerns of his soul. Tell him that there is one thing for which I have wished to live—that I might set an example to the young men of

Boston. He then spoke to his friends separately, exhorting them to meet him in heaven, and expressing for them the same strong affection which he ever exhibited through life. I asked him if he had any message for Elijah, to which he replied, 'Tell him I love him much, that I always loved him—to be faithful—to do all the good he can; that I should be glad to have his health to try.' Brother King was requested to pray; during the prayer, his sufferings, from difficulty of respiration, were very great. The physician, feeling his pulse, told him he thought he would live but a few minutes. He, however, afterward revived, and lingered until four o'clock the following morning, during which time he appeared to suffer greatly, and was much wandering."

The following extract from a letter to the editor, by the Rev. D. S. King, gives an additional view of his last hours :—

"His last day with us was the holy sabbath. Previous to that, although very weak, he had entertained hopes of surviving his sickness, and resuming his labours. On the morning of that day he was informed by his physician, Dr. A. B. Snow, that he could not recover, and must soon depart. He then very deliberately took leave of his friends, and gave directions concerning his earthly remains; after which he added :—

" 'The first two or three days I did not think my sickness serious; and since then, I have not thought it unto death: I expected a year or two of suspense, and then to finish (my course) with joy, and enter into eternal life.'

" 'The doctor has said I ought not to spend a great deal of time praying, because I have not the strength; but I have taken peculiarly sweet delight in praying and hearing prayer, and in hearing God's word read.'

"In the course of the forenoon he said, 'I want to tell brother King'—I drew near his bedside, and he con-

tinued, 'You know it is with much labour, and fear, and trembling that I have preached. It has pleased the Lord to give me some success in the work. This, with my feelings, gives me confidence that I am his child. I have the witness of the Spirit that I am a child of God.'

"Wishing to know, in the afternoon, what his views and feelings were, I remarked to him that Dr. Payson said, in his last sickness, that 'the Sun of righteousness had been drawing nearer and nearer, and now filled the whole hemisphere; and that the river of death appeared but as an insignificant rill, that might be crossed at a single step.' I then asked how it seemed to him. He answered, 'It is very small—and all daylight.'

"In the time of church service in the afternoon I asked him what would be his message to the congregation at Broomfield-street, could he be permitted to preach to them again. After a short pause he answered: 'I would say to the impenitent, Repent; I am sent from the grave to tell you! I would say to the church, Be faithful—at the peril of your present peace, at the peril of a peaceful death, and as you value the felicity and glory of the eternal world.' Here he paused, and then added, 'But they would not FEEL it.'

"All the remarks here attributed to your brother were uttered in broken accents, and with the utmost effort. And they are all in his own language, as I noted it at the time, not for publication, but as the last testament of one I loved.

"It seemed to him a mysterious providence that he should be called from his labours so soon, after having spent so much time in preparing to be useful. He indulged an ardent desire to live that he might do good. Nevertheless he could say in the language of his Master, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.'

"His toils are over. He has gone to be with Christ.

We may weep, not for him, but for ourselves and for the world. The family bereavement you know. The church has lost a shining light, and the patrons of literature a valuable treasure."

He died in Boston, at the house of his respected friend, Thomas Patten. In the bosom of that kind family all that could have been done for his restoration and comfort was gladly done, and their kindness will ever be remembered with gratitude. For a part of the last twenty-four hours his mind was wandering; yet even then, when drawn, by those around him, to the interesting truths of religion, it exhibited the clearness and vigour of other days. Before his departure he sank into a state of unconsciousness, appearing like one in a quiet sleep. At four o'clock in the morning, July 15, 1839, he expired, amid weeping friends and afflicted brethren. Could their wishes and prayers have availed, his name would still stand enrolled on the lists of the church militant, and, for years to come, he would remain at his post as a watchman on her walls. But God, in his infinite wisdom, called him hence; and he was called, we trust, to receive the reward reserved for the faithful when admitted to the church triumphant.

His funeral services were attended by a large concourse, on the afternoon of the following day, at the church in Broomfield-street. An address was delivered by the Rev. T. C. Pierce, and it was an occasion of deep and mournful interest. The corpse was thence conveyed to Lynn, where, on the following afternoon, the funeral solemnities were observed at the First Methodist church. The Rev. C. K. True delivered the address. The burial service was read at the grave, and his mortal remains were consigned to their last and peaceful resting-place by the side of nearly all his kindred. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Yes, thanks be to God, the light of immortality shines upon

the grave ! There is One who hath sublimely said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He rose from the dead. He liveth and reigneth for ever. And he hath given his followers the thrilling assurance, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Having thus followed his beloved brother to the end of his brief career, the writer may here be allowed to introduce the testimony of others, showing the character he sustained, and the estimation in which he was held.

The annexed extracts are from articles which appeared in *Zion's Herald*. The first is the tribute of a classmate, a gentleman of another religious persuasion ; and the second is from the pen of the Rev. R. W. Allen, of the Providence Conference.

"While at college, Brother Downing was distinguished as a scholar and a Christian. He possessed a well-disciplined mind, and a heart thoroughly imbued with divine grace. His attainments in general literature were very respectable, and his acquaintance with the several branches taught in college was both varied and deep. His powers of mind and uniform good sense were acknowledged wherever they were known. He was open, sincere, and upright ; always spoke the undisguised sentiments of his heart, and possessed a quick perception, united to a sound judgment. His conversation was always sober and to the purpose. His spirit and conduct secured to him the high estimation of his teachers and fellow-students. In a word, he was a sound scholar, an affectionate friend, and a devout Christian. By his college friends he will be fondly remembered, and his loss will be deeply deplored.

"His moral character was 'a living epistle, known and read of all men.' He is deservedly lamented by the church and society for whom he faithfully laboured, and by the religious denomination of which he was a useful and distinguished member. But he is gone. And the very

circumstance of his early death will give a new interest to his memory, and thereby new force to his example. Just at that age when the painter would have wished to fix his likeness, and the lover of poetry would delight to contemplate him, in the fair morning of his virtues, the full spring blossom of his hopes,—just at that age hath death set the seal of eternity upon him, and the beautiful hath been made permanent !”

“I have been acquainted with Brother Downing,” says Mr. Allen, “since 1834. I always found him a brother, a friend, a Christian, and a worthy and intelligent companion and associate. He seemed always far removed from ostentation and pride, and possessed, apparently, but little confidence in his own abilities. He exhibited a practical comment on the words of the apostle, ‘But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.’ He remarked to me while on our way to the conference held at Nantucket, when he was about being examined by the committee, before admission into the New-England Conference, ‘I am about to be examined, as my two years of probation have expired, but I don’t know what examination I shall pass. Some, I suppose, think that, because I have been through college, there will be no difficulty ; but it seems to me that I could compass all I ever learned in college in a nut-shell. What I have learned has only laid a foundation for future acquisitions in knowledge. People are mistaken when they think that, because a man has been through college, he knows every thing, and is proud of it. I feel that I have just begun to learn.’

“Brother Downing took a deep interest in the subject of ministerial qualifications. He laboured hard to promote the interests of the ‘Junior Preachers’ Society,’ connected with the New-England Conference. Respecting the proposed theological institution he felt a lively

interest. Many will recollect the pathos with which he expressed himself at our last annual conference. After urging in an eloquent manner the importance of immediately establishing such an institution, he exclaimed, by way of allusion to an objection often urged, 'I solemnly believe, under God, we can have an institution of this kind, which will cherish and promote the piety of young men, instead of proving detrimental to it.* Little did I think that his labours at this time, in behalf of a noble and much-needed institution, would be his last! . . . Zion is truly called to mourn. One of her most promising sons has fallen; one from whom she might reasonably have expected much in future years."

The following is from the memoir prepared by the committee of the New-England Conference for insertion in their Minutes:—

"Brother Downing possessed an intellect of a high order, and his preaching was distinguished for sound views and just discrimination, perspicuous and elegant diction, and a decided, earnest, and pathetic manner. Ardent zeal for Christ, and for the salvation of souls, appeared in all his public and private ministrations. His piety was an ever-burning flame, and was manifested even more brightly at the domestic altar than under the inspiring associations of the temple."

His decease was thus noticed by the editors of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*:—

"REV. J. W. DOWNING—DEAD.—Zion's Herald of the 17th inst. comes to us with melancholy tidings. The loss we now mourn will be felt deeply and widely. Brother

* There is a division of opinion, as is well known, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in regard to the expediency of establishing theological institutions. The publishers of this work, as agents for the Church, do not hold themselves responsible for the views which were entertained on this question by the subject of this memoir.—Ed.

He knew that he must soon die, for he felt the workings of death in his members. His excessive labours for the cause of Christ and the welfare of his brethren had already undermined his constitution; his fatigues and manifold sufferings had impaired his strength, and diminished his energies. He saw that nature must soon sink under the weight of his bodily infirmities, and that should he escape the martyr's stake, it would be only to find a premature death in his busy round of duties.

In thus anticipating death, however, the apostle was fully persuaded of two great truths, which he has expressed in the words of our text. 1. That he possessed an immaterial principle which would survive the dissolution of the body, and endure to all eternity—a principle so noble in its nature and in its effects, that he speaks of it as constituting the human being, though the body be dead. The apostle was no skeptic, though he had drunk deeply from the fountains of philosophy. He was no materialist, but rejoiced in the consciousness that while the outward man perished, the inward man was renewed day by day. 2. That an eternal residence was prepared for him (and all the followers of Christ) in heaven. Of this heaven and its unchanging glories he had very just conceptions. Though the joys reserved for those who love God could not be displayed to human sight, or be comprehended by sinful minds, yet God had revealed them unto *him* by his Spirit. He had even been “caught up to the third heaven,” to gaze upon its dazzling glories—to survey its unbounded plains of happiness—to walk its golden streets—to listen to the choral songs of saints and angels around the throne, and then let down again to earth to toil and suffer till his Master should call him home to rest. No wonder, then, that the anticipation of death was entirely divested of gloom and fear, and that he was even joyful as the tabernacle of flesh was dissolving. These ravishing truths

had taken entire possession of his soul, and had driven out every feeling of despondency and distrust. Never, perhaps, my hearers, did more triumphant language burst from the lips of the apostle unless when, in the immediate prospect of his martyrdom, he exclaimed, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Let us very briefly consider,

I. *The source from which this knowledge is derived.*

That the soul is immortal cannot be demonstrated from the works or changes of nature. With the assistance of the Bible we may trace many analogies from nature which will lead us to believe in this important doctrine. But nature is a mystery which the guiding hand of revelation alone can teach us to unravel. Nature's light, aside from that which beams from heaven, falling upon the darkness with which we are surrounded, renders it but the more appalling.

The changes of nature, which we call the seasons, might seem at first to afford us a ray of light in pursuing our inquiries concerning the destiny of man. Spring returns again to the same soil when the desolations of winter are over, and summer yearly clothes the same valleys with their robes of green. And will not "spring visit *the mouldering urn*?" Nature is silent here. The old man sees that his spring is past for ever, and that he can behold the ripened sweets of summer only in his offspring. The vegetable world also sends forth no light to cheer us.

The seed is placed in the earth ; it germinates, and a fair plant appears, which arrives at maturity and decays ; but the seed from which it sprung, decayed to nourish it. Thus man arrives at his maturity, accomplishes the objects of his physical existence, and perishes. What have you learned from this analogy but the fact, that generations succeed each other in regular and quick succession, and that the father must soon lend his ashes to cover those of his children !

The chrysalis, however, holds out to us a glimmering light. This is the first beam which falls upon us ; but does it not in the end both disappoint and mock us ? With wonder and delight we behold the worm enveloping itself in its oval case, remaining dormant for a season, and then bursting its covering, and appearing in all the variegated beauty and gaudy colouring of the butterfly. Will not the dead burst from the grave and appear on earth again with renewed beauty ? May we not hope that the human body, the fairest of earthly forms, possesses such powers as to outrival the grovelling worm ? But does it remain dormant ? Alas ! as soon as the warmth of life has left it, corruption seizes it ; scarce has the parting breath heaved the bosom before the work of dissolution goes on in every member. In a few days we must remove from our sight, and bury in the earth that form, now loathsome, which we once delighted to hold in our embraces, and clasp to our bosoms ! Still, restless and anxious, man walks forth amid the tombs to see if any of their inmates have shaken off corruption. Have any thrown off the drapery of death ? Have any burst the clods of the valley ? Alas ! his only answer is the murmuring breeze, mournfully waving the rank grass of the grave. But, anxious inquirer, call memory to thine aid, and let history be thy assistant. Thus accompanied, go back to the days of the patriarchs. “ Your fathers, where are they ? ” Have any of them arisen ? Alas ! the

unbroken silence of the grave stops our inquiries. O! have not these long sleepers been dormant long enough to awake, if indeed they will ever be reanimated? Thus man returns from his search, bewildered and despondent. The light which he has followed has led him into more inextricable mazes, and he returns no more to wander, but to weep and die.

Philosophy, after all its researches and discoveries, cannot tell us what is the essence of mind, or whether it be indeed distinct from the essence of matter. It can enumerate the different faculties or powers of the mind, and show us the laws by which it is governed, but cannot tell us its destiny. It sees, on the one hand, how much it is affected by the body—how weak it frequently becomes when disease fastens on our systems—how childish its manifestations often appear when old age palsies our physical energies; and it anxiously asks, Will it not cease altogether with the dissolution of its tenement? On the other hand, it beholds it sometimes triumphing over the weakness of the body—gaining new strength under bodily exhaustion—seeing things in a clearer light through the opening crevices of its prison-house, and putting forth its noblest energies in the last moments of expiring nature. And then philosophy, bewildered, asks, Will not the soul live independent of the body? It has learned, also, that if certain portions of the brain are impaired or destroyed, certain functions of the mind are lost. Remove one part, and we cease to remember past events; another, and judgment forsakes us; if *all* be removed, all these powers are witnessed no more. It sees too, that the material part which is taken away moulders into dust. Has not *that which* remembered and reasoned, shared its fate? Philosophy cannot answer. The body, it sees, is disorganized and entirely decomposed; is it thus with the mind, or does *it* exist independent and entire? In vain we

press the important question, for philosophy has already drained its resources.

Our hopes and fears are not limited to this brief existence, nor are they confined to this transitory world. No; they stretch themselves forward to immortality, and hover over worlds of bliss and misery. Eagerly do we desire to live for ever; more eager still are we to enjoy an eternity of bliss. But these desires are connected with the body which dies; will they exist when death triumphs over us? Philosophy is silent. Our desire of life is associated with the thought of existing *in these bodies*; it cannot be disconnected from it. We can *by nature* have no idea of a life essentially different from the present. Nothing but the word of God can assure us of the resurrection of the body, and Philosophy must answer, therefore, whether these desires will ever be satisfied. Cheerless and discouraging indeed is it to hear her reply, —Of the immortality of the soul we have conjectures, but no proof.

Refer to the histories of heathen nations, and you will find that their notions on this subject were as vague and obscure as the sources from which they derived them; some among them believing, some doubting, and others denying the immortality of the soul.

The Bible alone settles the question, and teaches us that when “the dust shall return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” It disperses every doubt by assuring us, that the impress of eternity is stamped upon every human soul.

That a heaven of unchanging glory and eternal happiness is prepared for the good, can be proved only from revelation. That we are the subjects of moral government might be supposed without the revelation of this fact, from the workings of conscience within us. Why is there a judge seated in every breast to approve some

actions, and disapprove others? Why does it urge us to do right, and dissuade us from wickedness? Why does it torture us with fears, and allure us with hopes? Why does it drive even to confession and reparation, unless it be the agent of a higher Power who smiles on virtue? But if he govern us, why has he not clearly revealed his laws? Why do the wicked prosper while the good suffer? Would a moral government be thus loosely administered? Are we not rather our own masters?

But if there be a moral government maintained in this world, will it not end here? Will the day ever arrive when the virtuous shall be rewarded, and the wicked punished? Can reason, aside from revelation, point to a judgment-day when these apparent discordances shall be harmonized, and perfect justice commence its eternal course? Can uninspired reason tell us that moral government is founded upon the immutable and eternal principles of right? that moral government will be maintained when the heavens and the earth shall pass away? Could it do so, it might have anticipated revelation. The philosopher, aided by the light which science has shed around him, may teach us that our world is accompanied by others which revolve around the sun as their common centre; and with wonderful exactness may calculate their distances, their magnitudes, and the periods of their revolutions. He may bid us gaze on the "midnight glory" of the heavens, and exultingly assure us that every twinkling star which adorns the skies is a world of surpassing magnitude and beauty. But can he point us to one of them as our future and eternal residence? On the wings of fancy he may travel to the most distant star that rolls on its glittering orbit in the regions of space, but he cannot trace the flight of the deathless spirit!

Philosophy, assisted by art in her investigations, has almost annihilated space, and has brought distant worlds

to view ; but it has not given us one glimpse of the celestial city whose walls are "jasper," and whose streets are "gold." It hath not seen that "land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign." Never, O never has it discovered a world where "there shall be no night;" where "they need no candle, neither light of the sun;" where "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" but where "the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters;" and where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The wisest of the heathen thought of no *such* heaven. Many of them believed, that when the body died the soul wandered forth, and entered into some other body ; strange and degrading as it may seem to us upon whom the light of the gospel hath shone, they asserted that the human soul became the inmate of brutes and reptiles, and thus for ages dragged 'out a constantly shifting and miserable existence on the shores of time. Socrates and Plato, the wisest and the best of the Grecian philosophers, could only teach their followers that "virtue is its own reward in the present world, and is entitled also to reward in the life to come." But that reward they could not promise to their most devoted friends. No wonder then that their efforts were so feebly put forth, and so feebly felt.

The Bible, however, removes the veil from futurity, and bids us behold the resting-places of the saints, and the abodes of the lost. It clears up all mysteries, and harmonizes all the apparent discrepancies in the present state of things. Specially was it reserved for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to bring "life and immortality to light through the gospel." He rehearsed, when on earth, a part of that language which he himself will utter when the drama of time is finished, and its scenes brought to an eternal close. "Come, ye blessed of my Father,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." When his mission on earth was nearly completed, and he was about to leave his disciples, he gave them the kind assurance, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." My brethren, how dear to our hearts are these glorious truths! How dear to us then should be the volume of inspiration whence they are derived! How adored and glorified by us should be that Being who hath placed this treasure in our hands!

II. *The character of him who can adopt the language of the text.*

1. *The infidel* has neither "part nor lot in this matter." Over the grave all is darkness to him, as thick as that which covered the ancient heathen; as appalling as that which now hangs over the plains and vales of paganism. Why should it be otherwise? He has discarded revelation, and shut out the only light which can break in upon the darkness of his soul. Look at France while infidelity was in the ascendancy in that fair land! Pass by its crowded grave-yards, and in its cheerless inscription, "Death is an eternal sleep," read the creed of infidels! And yet behold these same men holding on to life with an eagerness more than proportioned to the innumerable dangers which surrounded them; clinging to earth, when it was dyed with the blood and whitened with the bones of their murdered friends; running to the poor fountains of earthly happiness, when they knew them to be poisoned by hatred, and saw them turbid with blood: yea, carrying with them in every step of their wanderings a mountain-

load of suffering and wretchedness. Why not exchange all this turmoil, and suffering, and wo, for an "eternal sleep"—"secure from wordly chances and mishaps"—but for the "dread of something after death?"

"To sleep! perchance to dream,—ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what *dreams* may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause."

Cheerless indeed would be even the doctrine of an eternal sleep; but even this infidels cannot embrace, else would they court it. In the language of one of them, "Death is a leap in the dark," learn their fearful belief. Well might Rousseau, on the evening of his death, ask to be seated by his window that he might gaze upon the glories of the setting sun. The darkness of death was gathering in around him, and, unattended, he was to pass through its gloomy valley. That light once gone down, none other would dawn upon him! O infidelity; cruel, relentless monster! instead of smoothing thy votary's passage to the tomb, thou hast added new terrors to the "king of terrors!"

2. *The nominal Christian* cannot enjoy the assurance of the apostle. He may use these words as expressive of an abstract truth, but he cannot feel that heaven is secure to *him*. Are there no conditions of admittance into that "house not made with hands?" The Bible answers by saying, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." It enjoins "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Have I complied with these conditions? Alas, a life of carnal ease, of following a sinful world, and of placing the best affections of the heart upon its worthless, sinful objects, leaves no room for hope, but boundless cause for fear. Conscience asks imperatively the all-deciding question, Am I holy? and thunders back the accusing answer, No! Ask the man who fully believes in the necessity of

experimental religion, but who has not embraced it, on what his hopes of heaven are built, and he will reply, On the expectation that I shall yet repent and believe in Christ. Ask him when brought near to death with an unrenewed heart, if the assurance of the apostle is *his*; and you will receive a sorrowful answer, accompanied with sighs and tears. He feels that his theory is of no avail now; his heart is unholy and unfit for heaven; he has sinned away the day of grace; he tries to repent and to pray; but death will not wait for him to redeem the time that is lost. The "coming events" of eternity "cast their shadows before," and they fall on his dreary way. Death is not a "leap in the dark" to *him*, but the entrance into a blazing, burning world! O, if distressing sighs and heart-rending groans are heard in any place on earth, they are heard in the dying room of the nominal Christian! Dear sinner, I charge thee to beware of procrastination! Plant not thy dying pillow with these piercing thorns!

3. *The practical Christian* is the only person who can adopt the triumphant language of our text. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as a propitiatory and vicarious sacrifice for *his* sins, and for the sins of the whole world—faith in Christ as a Saviour who is able entirely to deliver us from the dominion, the condemnation, and the consequences of sin—faith in Christ as the Lord to whom "is given all power in heaven and in earth," secures to him the evidence of justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. He knows that he is not deceived, for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." He claims the promises through faith, and knows that they cannot fail, for they are as sure as the everlasting throne upon which his Saviour sits. This was the ground of Paul's confidence: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep

that which I have committed unto him against that day." And O! my brethren, how gloriously did this assurance support him when called to die for Christ! How different the closing scene of his life from that of the infidel and the nominal Christian! See him as he is taken from the damp cell of his gloomy prison, and led to the place of execution. No anger nor malice distorts his noble countenance, but love and joy light up every feature; that sparkling eye and smiling face tell of a hope not long to be deferred. Behold him as he surrenders himself to his executioners!—

"His fight is fought, his faith has reach'd the end,
Firm to the heav'ns his glance, his heart ascend;
There with the Judge he sees his crown remain,
And if to live be Christ, to die is gain."

"Tell him, I am glad I experienced religion when in health, else I should have nothing to support me now." Such, brethren, was the language of our departed sister, whose loss we deeply feel, and whose memory we fondly cherish. From this you plainly perceive that it was *experimental religion* which sustained her in the hour of death—a religion which she embraced a year ago, when her prospect of life was more flattering than many of ours—a religion which failed not when earthly prospects were blasted.

Let it be remarked, however, that the assurance of Christians will, at different times, vary in its strength; but it will always be the strongest when they are most resigned to the will of God. Our departed friend had much for which to live. Hard must it have been to resign an only child even to the hands of kind friends—harder still to die without beholding the companion of her bosom who was so soon to return to her. Strange would it have been, were there no struggle between nature and grace. While she wavered in her resignation, she could not see

clearly her "mansion in the skies;" but when she gave up all to God, she enjoyed the full assurance of the apostle. "I am ready and willing to go," said she, as she thought she was stepping into the stream. When informed that it was Saturday evening, she remarked, "I expect to spend the sabbath in heaven; but O! how dreadful would it be if I should be disappointed!" "You do not expect to be disappointed, do you?" rejoined a friend. "O no," she answered; "~~I~~ shall not, *I know I shall not.*" When extreme bodily suffering diverted the mind from its accustomed course to wander it scarce knew where, even then she spoke of death as something which had no sting; yea, as a kind angel, whom she wooed to her embrace, as bearing to her a sweet release from the pains and sufferings of life. "*I died happy,*" said she in one of her momentary wanderings, "*and was accepted.*" Sainted spirit! is not that a reality *now*, which was then the vision of a disturbed imagination?

III. *Some of the practical effects which this knowledge should have upon us.*

1. It should lead us to devote our chief attention to the soul. This, you are aware, is not the fashion of the world. It devotes the chief attention to gratifying the bodily appetites; to satisfying the sensual desires; and to cultivating those mental faculties which fit men to walk in the polished circles of society, and pursue the pathway to influence and fame. The soul, the spiritual part of man, is least of all regarded. Do you doubt the assertion? Look abroad over society, and count the thousands who die victims to mental labour; the tens of thousands whom sensuality destroys. But if the body must soon crumble into dust, if ambition is narrowed to this world, and if the soul is immortal, and, above all, if it may live for ever in glory, should we not prize *it most*? Should we not prepare it for that place where there are pleasures for ever? O! let

If you will recur for a moment to a very memorable saying of the Saviour, you will distinctly see the nature and extent of this difference, in thought and action, between man and his Creator. He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and in confirmation of the doctrine, gave his heart's blood unto his enemies, and freely made "his soul an offering for sin" for those who could not recompense him. The policy of man, on the other hand, has invariably been to obtain and to retain in his single grasp the treasures of earth; and in the possession of riches he has supposed the highest earthly happiness to consist. Thus he who has secured to himself many of the treasures of earth is envied by multitudes, while he who distributes freely to the necessities of others, and who labours to collect that he may enjoy the happiness of distributing, is either pitied as deluded, or censured as prodigal. While therefore this false policy rules the human breast, there will be misery in society. For as long as men are actuated by such views and feelings, they will toil excessively for aggrandizement. In their haste to become rich they will neither respect the rights of man, nor regard the laws of God. They will turn away their eyes from the wants of the poor, and close their ears to the cries of the widow and the fatherless. But just in proportion as the gospel becomes authoritative in society this selfish policy will disappear. Man will become fraternal; human rights and divine laws will be regarded; the sufferings of the poor will be assuaged, and the sum of human happiness will be increased.

The same difference between the thoughts and ways of God and those of man is clearly exhibited in our text. The Saviour promises blessings to those who provide for the poor and needy, the distressed and helpless, but not because in human view the money thus expended is profitably invested. No interest can be reaped on earth, and

even the principal cannot be repaid us. How then, might the calculating spirit of covetousness inquire, is the saying true, "thou shalt be blessed?" I gladly answer, in view of the principles laid down in the sacred volume, that if the investment be made in the name and spirit of a disciple of Jesus, it is money lent to God—it is treasure laid up in heaven—it is stock funded for eternity. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just"—when the earth and all its treasures shall be burned up.

I have made these remarks at the commencement of my discourse, that I might induce you, for an hour at least, cheerfully to abandon this worldly policy, with which we are daily surrounded, and with which it would not be strange if we were in some degree infected. And I beseech you, in view of the important truths at which I have merely hinted, to welcome to your bosoms the economy of heaven, replete with benevolence and love, while I lay before you the wants of those who cannot recompense you, and who are dependant upon your charities. And I am inspired with the assurance of success this evening, not only because I address those whose hearts the gospel has made tender and benevolent, but also because I am the organ of a society with which you have long been acquainted, and because I know the character of the claimants for whom I shall plead, and the validity of the claims which I shall advocate. The character of the claimants is beautifully expressed in the language of our text: "They cannot recompense thee." Let us consider then,

I. *The cause of their poverty.* When solicited for alms by any individual, the first question which arises in the mind is, Why is he poor? How came he to need my aid? Is his poverty the natural result of his follies and his vices, or of afflictive circumstances, over which he could have no control? Reason and conscience both

unite in prompting us to make these inquiries ; for long since it has been seen that indiscriminate charity scatters without blessing. The man who gives bountifully to every wandering beggar that approaches his house, irrespective of his wants, and indifferent to the manner in which his bounty may be applied, may be commended more for the kindness of his heart than for the soundness of his judgment : for the course which he pursues encourages idleness and nourishes dissipation. The answer, therefore, to this important question, Are the poor innocent or guilty in their poverty? may, in many cases, decide whether it is our duty to give or to withhold.

It is not my purpose on this occasion to spread before you the causes of the poverty that exists in society. I would not lead you over so wide and dreary a field, even had I the ability and courage requisite for commanding such an "exploring expedition." My design is very briefly to show you the causes of their poverty on whose behalf I now speak, that I may fully convince you that they are the proper objects of your charity. And if you will but listen, reason will prompt, and conscience beseech you to give liberally of your abundance to their necessities. The members of this benevolent society will bear me witness, that I have no doubtful cases to lay before you. In answer to the question, Why are their pensioners poor? I unhesitatingly answer, God hath made them so, and cheerfully invite you to examine the proof of this position.

Long ere this must the attention of every careful observer have been arrested by the fact, that God governs both the natural and moral world by general laws. The necessity and wisdom of this economy will be apparent to every one who examines it. In a world where sin abounds, the operation of these laws promotes the happiness of man as a race, though it sometimes conflicts for a

season with the happiness of individuals. Let us not, however, on this account, charge Jehovah with lack of wisdom or of love in the arrangements which he has made, but rather remember with deep contrition of soul the humiliating fact, that our sins have interfered with the operation of a government which, in their absence, would have secured, at the same time and for ever, the greatest happiness of the whole, and of each of its component parts. Now it is the operation of these laws, under these circumstances, which has made those individuals poor for whom we this evening solicit your contributions. Some of these laws I will briefly notice.

1. It is a general law, that the condition of children should be greatly affected by the character and circumstances of their parents. This position will be neither questioned nor denied. The proof lies scattered in ample profusion over all communities and nations, and is as ancient as the world. It is a revealed truth that the condition of every descendant of Adam, in consequence of the fall, has been rendered degraded and painful. The ground has been cursed with sterility, and covered with thorns; the beasts of the field have been suffered to roam wild and untractable; the atmosphere has been infected with noxious damps and pestilential vapours; disease, pain, and death, in all their varied forms, have been entailed upon our race. And, what is still more lamentable, man by the fall lost the moral image of his God. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint," and man manifests the unnatural appetite which this sickness has created, in hating holiness and in loving sin. The sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve will be, "to the last syllable of recorded time," proofs of the universality of this great law.

You may witness its operation on a narrower scale. In the circles of society in which we daily move, we see

the children of the worthy and the virtuous honoured and beloved for their parents' sakes. And when the father is called to "go up higher," his mantle falls upon his children. The son who receives it, and preserves it free from every taint of dishonour and vice, has a robe richer than one that is wrought of purple, and inwoven with gold. The latter may attract the gaze of the thoughtless crowd; but the former secures the confidence and esteem of the wise and good. So if a mother has stained the honour, and laid aside the virtue which were her shield in life, the daughter must share in her shame. She is treated with coolness, and beheld with distrust, by the virtuous of her sex, not on account of her own, but of her mother's vices. Long must her character be proved, before the circles of the virtuous will greet her welcome to their joys. We see the children of our neighbours varying widely in their prospects and circumstances, simply because the same difference marks their parents. Some are well educated and established in business, while others are poor and ignorant.

The children whose beseeching eyes are turned toward this society for assistance are as innocent as your own; they would be as cheerful and engaging, had not Providence made them the offspring of the poor and unfortunate. You cannot blame them for their poverty; they suffer not from guilt, not from choice. Had it been left with them to choose their lot, you may be well assured that they would not now entreat your compassion. And can you withhold from them your sympathy and your charity, since the operation of the same great law hath made them wretched which hath made both you and your families happy? Father of the friendless! forgive the neglecter of the innocent poor!

2. That the capabilities and facilities of men should differ, is another general law. That there is a great

diversity in the talents of men, is a position which has so long been maintained, and so fully proved, that it does not now admit of a question. This diversity is seen not only in the higher departments of mind, but also in common business and household affairs. There are some individuals who are destitute of many requisites for success in life. They are honest and industrious, but always unsuccessful and poor; while many, far inferior in every virtuous trait of character, roll proudly in affluence, or recline effeminately in ease. The wind is always against them, and they have no skill to beat against it, or to scud before it. The tide, too, "which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," sets in with resistless fury against them, and, unless assisted by a friendly hand, they must founder. Poor unfortunate souls! they may provoke our smiles, but they should move our pity! For theirs is the toil of labour, with few of its rewards; theirs the clouds and storms of life, with few of its sunny mornings or moonlight evenings. But they do the best they can; this is all their Maker requires—all that you should demand. "Be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful." That they cannot appear well in life, and move smoothly through its checkered scenes, is their misfortune, not their fault; for could they have been consulted respecting the talents which should be intrusted to them, they would now be preparing themselves to be appointed "over ten cities." It is God who hath made them to differ. Impeach not His wisdom, by passing by them with indifference or cold disdain!

So in the changes which are daily taking place among us, we see some individuals overwhelmed in a moment with misfortune. The hard-earned gains of many a weary day are consumed by fire, or pilfered by remorseless debtors. Others supported their families with ease by the proceeds of a profitable trade; but suddenly, by the

introduction of the improvements of the age, or by the decreasing demand in the market, the business once good is worthless. Some rise above these misfortunes, and engage in other branches of industry; while others, such is their constitution, sink under them. They have neither heart nor hands to try another path, though certain that the way they follow will lead to pinching want. These are the chances of life! and when they end in misfortune and poverty, who will withhold the tear of pity? who the hand of cheerful relief? God grant this lot may never be yours, my hearer; but if it fall upon you, may you be able to say,

“That mercy I to others show’d,
That mercy show to me.”

3. It is a law of our nature, that old age should unfit us for care and labour. Youth is the season of preparation for the cares and duties of life, manhood for its bustling scenes and arduous labours, old age for its calmness and repose. Hence our physical and mental powers increase till we reach the proud summit of life’s little hill, and then decrease as we travel downward to the grave. So yonder sun increases in splendour and glory till he reaches his zenith; but as he descends the western sky, his effulgence wanes, his fires forget their fervour, till at last, with all the gentle mildness of the sweet star of evening, he pillows his head to rest upon the bosom of the setting cloud. Who that has seen the gray-haired veteran tottering toward the grave will deem him fit to enter again upon the busy scenes of life? With him the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain. He has reached the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and those that look out of the windows are darkened. Eccles. xii, 2, 3. Who that beholds him, as hosts of infirmities surround him, will sum-

mon him again to till the ground, and, by the sweat of his wrinkled brow and furrowed cheeks, procure his bread? Who would trouble that spirit, already affected by its long and painful sympathizings with the infirmities of its earthly tabernacle—that spirit which must so soon return to the God who gave it, and which needs all its energies for the great scene before it? Who would perplex that spirit with cares for the sustenance of the body which, in a day or two, “shall return to the earth as it was?” Aged pilgrim, thou shalt not be thus afflicted; thy wants shall all be supplied. But I hear him say, as the big tear courses down its accustomed channel, “Mine was no easy lot in life. I toiled from early morn to starlight eve, but misfortune and sickness kept me always poor. Nothing of my scanty wages could I lay by me for the hour of need, and old age has found me in poverty. Nothing can I now call my own but these tattered garments, and a seat—O that I might soon occupy it!—a seat in heaven. God has also suffered me to outlive my friends. ‘I am an aged hemlock,’ and the generation which sprang up after me, and which I sheltered with my boughs, is cut down. My wife and children have gone before me to the eternal world. Thus alone and friendless, who will supply my wants? Who will warm, and feed, and shelter me, amid the howling winds and chilling snows of the winter of the year, and the winter of my life?” Come hither, poor old man! Thou art innocent in thy sufferings, and none shall dare reproach thee for thy poverty! Here are thy friends. Thy God hath raised up this society to provide for thee, and warmed the hearts of this people to pity thee. Thou shalt not be forsaken!

4. The last general law to which I will advert is, that diseases and death should make their ravages among us, regardless of our temporal condition. Our own observation and painful experience are the melancholy proof by

which we substantiate this position. We have seen disease fastening itself upon all classes of society. It enters the dwellings of the rich, and sits down in the hovels of the poor; it pays its court to the young and fair, nor does it neglect the old and the infirm. Scarce a pulse beats which it has not quickened and retarded, scarce a cheek blooms which it has not crimsoned and blanched. We have felt its wasting effects. It has suspended our business, weakened our energies, and wasted our substance. Thank God, from us it has been thrown off before it destroyed our energies and consumed our property. To others, however, it has clung closer and closer, and fastened its fangs deeper and deeper, with every effort made to shake it off. The father has been laid on the bed of pain, not only to contend with its ravages, but also to see his property wasting away with his strength, till the last farthing has gone. Like the woman in the days of Christ, he has spent all his living upon physicians, neither could be healed by any. His wife redoubled her efforts to provide for her husband and little ones, but the prospect grew darker, darker—till at last even woman could endure no longer, but sank, worn down by labour, and exhausted by watching and fatigue. O! if you will but enter that lonely chamber, and gaze upon the scene too painful to be described, you will see the sad marks of poverty which sickness has caused. Shall that sick man perish, and those children starve? When sickness enters the dwellings of wealth, it brings suffering as its companion; but when it visits the cottages of competency, it often also introduces poverty. It stops not however to count our gold, when it unlatches our door!

Death, you are aware, is quite as indiscriminate in his visits. He attacks all classes, and levels all distinctions. None are so high as to be above his reach, none so low as to be beneath his notice. The young and the old, the

virtuous and the vicious, are alike the victims of his power. Need we proof of these assertions? Painfully, mothers and sisters, has it been afforded you in the removal of three of your number to the world of spirits since your last anniversary. Ay, death has palsied the hands which fed the hungry, and clothed the naked; it has arrested the footsteps of youth tripping lightly in the paths of benevolence. Departed ones! your virtues shall be remembered and imitated! your memories shall be cherished in our bosoms, and embalmed with our tears! Death has entered our families, and cut off the ties of our hearts till they have bled at every pore; but he has not taken from us our earthly all. Innumerable, however, are the instances where he has been permitted to cut off every earthly hope, every worldly resource.

Go with me to another part of the city, and I will show you a family which death robbed of all, when it took away the husband and the father. He was industrious and virtuous, and supplied with his own hands the wants of his family; but misfortune overtook him while engaged in honest labour. He lingered for a season in helplessness, and then closed his eyes in death. For two long years that disconsolate widow, and those five small, fatherless children, have subsisted on their own scanty earnings, and the charities of others. Ay, you will say, they have drunk the cup of sorrow, and eaten the bitter weed of poverty. "God," said the mother to me a few days since, "has been very good to me;" and the tear filled her eye as she added, "the Female Friendly Society has assisted me. I know not what I should have done had it not been for kind friends." Details of suffering like this might easily be multiplied; but I refrain, as you cannot have forgotten the affecting cases which the secretary has embodied in her able report. I proceed hastily to assure you,—

II. *That these individuals are the proper objects of your charity.* You have already been made acquainted with their poverty and sufferings. Stronger proof you cannot ask than the testimony of these benevolent females, who have been the eye-witnesses of the scenes they describe. I have shown you that it is God who hath made them poor. Whatever, therefore, may be your feelings as you behold the poverty which is the natural result of a course of folly and of vice, you surely cannot withhold your sympathy and aid from those who suffer innocently, in consequence of misfortune, sickness, and death. That such are objects of charity is too plain a case to admit of laboured proof. Permit me rather to show you the estimation in which they are held by Him who is alike the Maker of the rich and poor.

I have said that God hath made them poor ; be assured, however, he hath not done so in anger or judgment toward them, for he considers them innocent in suffering. Could he have prevented their poverty without infringing the laws by which he governs us, his love would have prompted him to do it. But the great wheel of natural and moral government must roll round, till the present system of things is arrested. Sin shall then cease to interpose its baneful and disturbing power, "and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." But the morning which shall smile upon a restored and happy universe is the very morning that shall see thee recompensed for thy charities. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Till then, you will witness the truth of your Saviour's assertion, "The poor ye have always with you."

But the poor are very dear to God. Does not the sickliest of your group of children engage more of your sympathy and attention than the hale and hearty? Do not his very afflictions bind him to your heart? And shall

not God regard and pity the afflicted of his family? Make not your Father in heaven less kind than an earthly parent! Read, in the blessed volume of his word, the proof of his regard. Run over a few of the precious promises which he has made to them, and ask if they are not the language of his love: "The needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever." "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" But stronger evidence than this did he afford us, when he sent his Son to live and die the poorest of us all. The manger in which he was laid at his birth was but an indication of the poverty which should mark his life. See him as he wanders over the fertile plains and vine-clad hills of Judea. Judas follows him with the bag which contains the scanty store that charity has afforded for their wants. See him as he reposes his head to rest, with no pillow but the damp, cold earth—no covering but the broad, blue sky! Hear his melting description of his poverty: "The foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." But why should I enlarge? "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

And does not God mean, by all these proofs of kindness and love to the poor, to commend them to us? Why, but to secure our kindness on their behalf, hath he said, "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor." Why, but to enlist our aid, hath he said, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord?" Why, but to provide for their wants, hath he so strictly enjoined upon us the duty of benevo-

lence? Why is "the visiting the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions" a component part of that religion which is the only passport to the mansions of the blest? O! if the innocent poor are not very dear to you, it is not the fault of Jehovah! They bear the recommendation of your Saviour, they secure the guardian care of angels, and enlist the sympathies of heaven.

But I leave these sufferers with you. That same Providence which hath cut them off from the resources which are still open to you, hath bid me look to you for assistance in this hour of need. Shall I look in vain? You are the stewards of Heaven's bounty, and will you hesitate for a moment to appropriate a portion of it to their wants? You need not fear incurring His displeasure by giving liberally to the poor.

Providence transfers them to your guardian care, and waits to witness your emotions. This society, which his hand has raised up to scatter blessings in the paths of want, waits with solicitude to see how you will receive the transfer. Will you welcome it with a reception which shall secure the smiles of Providence—which shall answer the expectations, and gladden the hearts of this society? If you take it reluctantly, the Saviour will notice it, and frown upon you. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me." These benevolent females, your mothers and sisters, will notice it, and you will read their disappointment and sorrow in their downcast eyes. How shall they perform their toilsome labour, uncheered by your smiles—unsupported by your generous aid? How shall they tell the poor man that they can relieve his wants no more? What sighs shall rend their bosoms as they withdraw the scanty pension from the widow and the fatherless, whose sufferings they have so long assuaged? The friendless sick shall know it, in their cheerless, unattended agony, and withdraw from you their dying blessing!

Say then, ye almoners of Heaven's bounties, shall this empty treasury be replenished by your contributions no more? Shall the fountain of benevolence, which woman's watchful care has guarded, "lo, these eighteen years," gush forth no more in generous streams, to make glad the dwellings of the poor? The thought is painful, and your generosity forbids me to entertain it. You will gladly feed the sacred fountain! Bless, Father of mercies, the tributary streams which flow into it, and the healing waters which gush forth from it!

SERMON III.

NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.—Zechariah iv, 6.

CHRISTIANITY is a system peculiar to itself. It differs from every other, not only in the evidences of its authenticity, the sublimity of its doctrines, and the purity of its morality, but also in the manner of its promulgation. If there were nothing else to prove its divine origin, its wonderful progress, to the reflecting mind, would be amply sufficient. Of all other systems of religion which have at different times prevailed in our world, one remark may safely be made; they have all owed their success to the efforts of man. "The wisdom of men" invented them at first, and has been the only means used in upholding them in existence. The infinite God has not been recognised in their promulgation; he has stood aloof, and looked down with abhorrence upon those who have thus strayed from him in seeking out "many inventions." But far different from this is the remark which must be made by every candid man respecting Christianity. It owes its origin and success, *not to might, nor to power, but to the*

Spirit of the Lord of hosts. Its excellency is of God, and not of man. True, it recognises the pious man as an instrument in its promulgation; but it relies not on this instrumentality, but on the Spirit of the Lord; for he has worked, and does still work, independent of human means. It awards to man an ample compensation for his agency, but at the same time secures to God all the glory. For the song which shall for ever ring in heaven is, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Here is wisdom which can be found in no human system, and to which no man can ever attain. Well may we say with the apostle, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Let us endeavour to spread out the proof of the doctrine implied in our text; namely, *The Christian religion owes its success to the Spirit of God alone.* To do this, it will be necessary only to show that this success cannot otherwise be accounted for.

I. *Is Christianity adapted to the natural dispositions of man?* Were this the case, without supposing any supernatural agency, it would not be wonderful to behold multitudes flocking around the banner of the cross. Men will easily believe what is in accordance with the passions and propensities of their nature, and will readily embrace any system which lays no restraint upon their actions. The various systems of religion which prevailed in heathen nations, at the time of the introduction of Christianity, had suited themselves to the passions of man's carnal heart, and had therefore been embraced with avidity. The wise men who invented them imposed but few restraints; and, as if to compensate for these, allowed the free indulgence of many of the most degrading vices. Indeed, the very gods whom their imaginations created, and whom they blindly worshipped, were represented as

addicted to many crimes, and as looking down with complacency upon those who followed their example. And further, if a favourite propensity craved indulgence, the only thing necessary was to create a god who would be pleased with such indulgence, and accept it as a sacrifice. To such extent was this carried, that all these creeds appear childish and ridiculous to us who are blessed with a revelation from heaven. But they were exactly adapted to the feelings of men in those ages of the world, and were of course universally embraced by the heathen.

So also it is not at all difficult to account for the spread of Mohammedanism. The inventor of this system was a man well acquainted with human nature ; he was familiar with all its devious windings ; and, availing himself of this knowledge, draughted a plan to which thousands subscribed. To the lover of the marvellous he gave scope for the exercise of his propensity ; to the warrior he gave the laurel of earthly glory ; to the hero the crown of empire ; and to the sensualist the key of indulgence. To all classes and conditions of men he had something to offer to gratify their desires ; he promised his faithful followers an earth of pleasure and a heaven of sensuality.

But far different from any and all of these systems is Christianity. When Christ delivered his messages from heaven, they grated harshly upon the ears of the multitude, and roused into action all the resentment of the human heart. His maxims were opposed to the maxims of the world, and his doctrines required an entire change in the spirit and conduct of men. He maintained the excellence and dignity of that God against whom the carnal mind is enmity, and the claims of that holy law against which man had rebelled. He at once strove to annihilate the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, the skepticism of the Sadducee, and the wisdom of the scribe. He required of all men, Jews and Gentiles, humility and repentance,

to which man has always been averse. He commanded them to lay aside their boasted wisdom, and, with all the simplicity and humility of a child, to approach unto Jesus of Nazareth, and learn of him; more than all this, he required a change of heart to prepare them for heaven, and, in the strongest and boldest manner, endeavoured to awaken their hopes and fears by describing a future judgment and a coming eternity. He hesitated not to foretell future misery, but as confidently and as fearlessly asserted that there is a hell, as he did that there is a God and a heaven. All these doctrines were in opposition to the human heart; but the Saviour stemmed the tide of error, and breasted the waves of opposition, and his disciples fearlessly followed his example. And thus it must be at the present day. True religion has not lost its peculiarities, nor have men lost theirs; they are both arrayed against each other. 'The minister of the gospel cannot preach a gospel which men as sinners love. No man loves to be told that he is a sinner, exposed to God's wrath for ever; that he must humble himself, repent of his sins, and be converted; and that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." These doctrines never yet pleased the careless sinner, and they never will. But this religion has spread, does spread, and shall spread all over the earth; not because its doctrines please the sinner,—*not by might, nor by power; but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.*

II. *Does Christianity offer its converts worldly honours?* The various heathen religions found their way to the hearts of men by the earthly pomp and glory with which they were surrounded. They secured to their votaries all that the world could offer. Those who desired to fill important stations in society, or to gain reputation and influence, were careful to reverence the gods of the land. They were strict in going through the whole round of

superstitious practices and ceremonies. Union of church and state in those days was of no rare occurrence. So Mohammed offered his followers all that was splendid and fascinating in the honours of earth.

But Jesus Christ commenced his mission under all the disadvantages of obscurity and poverty. He came into the world destitute of every appearance of worldly honour—born of an humble virgin, and cradled in a manger. He desired no worldly honour, for his kingdom was “not of this world.” He “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” When the people would have taken him by force to make him a king, he escaped from them; he would not meddle with crowns or empires, nor lift his finger to free his countrymen from Roman bondage. He would not even assume the character of an earthly judge to settle differences between his brethren. “Who made me a judge or a divider over you?” No, he came to die for man. You are well acquainted with his history, with the disgrace which the Jewish nation heaped upon him, and with the last insult they offered him. When he entered Jerusalem, I know that, at first sight, there was some appearance of worldly honour; but on close investigation this appearance vanishes; it has been called a triumphant entrance; but to me it seems to have been the triumph of humility over pride.

So also the religion which Christ taught partook of his divine nature. It promised no man riches, but taught him to despise them. It ensured no man worldly friends, but commanded him to forsake them. It placed on no convert a crown of earthly glory, but taught him to look for a crown which is reserved for the faithful in another world.

It required all its professors to come out from the world. The success of all other religions which have ever prevailed has greatly depended on the worldly honours which they have promised; had these been withdrawn, the motives for embracing them would have been greatly diminished. But this cannot be asserted of the Christian religion; for it disappointed all the hopes, and blasted all the prospects, of those to whom it was first offered. It does not recognise this world except as a state of probation, a scene of suffering and warfare. I know there was a time in the history of the church when worldly honours crept into it; but that was an awful time; that is a black page which "no fuller on earth" can whiten. Man added to religion what God had prohibited. The church lost its compass, and its iniquities hid from it the Sun of righteousness; at last its piety vanished, and God raised up another people to serve him. When worldly honours creep into any church, and are used as motives to induce men to love God, the glory of that church has departed. If religion be embraced at all, it must be embraced for its own sake; and while man has a carnal mind, nothing can induce him to love God but the Holy Spirit operating on his nature, enlightening his understanding, and purifying his affections. And if man would be saved, he must not resist the Holy Ghost. "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*"

III. *Does Christianity offer its followers ease and quiet?* On the contrary, it ensures trials, persecutions, and afflictions as the earthly portion of all its votaries. Surely there must be something supernatural in the spread of a religion which is contrary to the disposition and wishes of man, and at the same time deprives him of worldly honours and worldly ease. From the life of the Saviour, the founder of the Christian religion, we might safely predict the sufferings of his followers, since "the servant

is not above his master." He did indeed lead a life of sorrow. He had not where to lay his head. He was exposed to earthly inconveniences and hardships, and suffered as no man can suffer. He wept as no man can weep. Behold him at the grave of Lazarus. Hear his lamentation over Jerusalem, and from the language of his lips infer the agony of his soul: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" See him in the garden of Gethsemane, and imagine the poignancy of that grief which caused the bloody sweat. And then follow him to the cross, and as the soldier drives the nail, mark well that quivering flesh, that mangled nerve. What was that mental anguish which caused him to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

But the sufferings of his followers were not left to be found out by experience. He plainly told them that they must take up the cross; that if the world persecuted him, it would persecute them also. His apostles went forth in the same manner, and, by their sufferings as well as by their words, taught all men that they must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God;" and that those who "will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." Nothing softened the repulsiveness of these assertions, but the voice of the Redeemer as he unfolded the realities of eternity: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." These declarations have been verified in the experience of every saint who has reached heaven. He has "come out of great tribulation." They must be verified in the

experience of Christians in all coming ages, till the world shall be brought into subjection to Christ; for Christ "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

If you will look back upon the history of the church, you will find ample proof of the truth of Christ's words. Follow the church during the three centuries succeeding the crucifixion of her Lord. See her wading through suffering and afflictions; mark how every step of her progress is stained with the blood of her truest friends. O! had not the Holy Spirit, the blessed Comforter, breathed comfort into their souls, and sustained them by his heavenly aid in all their trials and afflictions, the progress of religion must have ended for ever. Instead of the triumphant song of the dying martyr, would have been heard the sigh of agony, and the wail of despair.

Behold also the sufferings of the people of God when the Roman Catholic power triumphed over all Europe, and set at naught all law, human and divine. Read the history of the Waldenses, that pious people who fled to the valleys of the Alps that they might, unmolested, love and serve their God. There, my brethren, you will learn the fiendish character of that "*infallible, unchanging church*," which now threatens the destruction of all that is dear to us in civil and religious liberty. There you will read tales of anguish which will harrow up your souls, and cause your blood to chill within you. There you may hear notes of suffering which should sound an alarm throughout every village and city of our country, in the ear of every patriot and Christian, and cause him to put on the armour of the gospel, and pray mightily to the God of Israel for assistance. Wake up, sinner! Come up at least to the defence of civil liberty! "Wake to righteousness, and sin not." You may be called to suffer with the church, but, unless converted, you cannot share in the rewards of eternity.

The history of the church teaches us that she has always been persecuted; she has always been burning, but is not consumed: while the Spirit of the Lord of hosts is in her midst, she can never be consumed. But on what other principle can you account for her existence? What but the Spirit of God has preserved her so that her enemies have not long since triumphed over her? Has any other cause been abused so much? Has any other cause triumphed so widely? Has any other cause sustained itself at all under such combined and mighty efforts for its destruction? No! The existence of the Christian church can be accounted for only by the existence and continued protection of that God who "causeth the wrath of man to praise him"—who shall give to his Son Jesus Christ "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*"

IV. *Can the influence of mere learning account for the success of Christianity?* Knowledge always tends to enlighten the understanding, and enlarge the mind. It shows man the reasons which should prompt him to action; but it has no impelling force. It cannot make him act contrary to his will; it cannot procure for him the drawings of the Spirit; it can only teach him that there are such drawings. Now Christ hath said, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." Nor can knowledge carry on the work of grace in the heart; for it cannot secure the assistance of Christ, and "without me," saith Christ, "ye can do nothing;" it cannot procure faith, and "the just shall live by faith." Now as knowledge cannot convert one man, nor carry on the work of grace in his heart, of course it cannot do this for any number of men; and cannot, therefore, account for the spread of Christianity.

We do not undervalue knowledge, however, but rejoice in its diffusion ; we believe that ministers of the gospel should acquire all the knowledge which they possibly can, and that the church should be engaged, heart and hand, in the cause of education. Knowledge, if under the control of the Spirit of God, will be instrumental in the advancement of religion ; but if not, it will prove a curse. Paul was a man of learning, and he used it all in defence of religion ; but it was not his learning which converted souls ; he himself said, " I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase." Yes, God made use of Paul's learning to promote his own cause ; it was the Holy Spirit that applied the truth to the hearts of the apostle's hearers. To say that Paul's learning converted souls, would be as absurd as to say that the hammer drives the nail ; the fact is, the man drives the nail with an instrument, that is, a hammer ; so God uses instruments in extending his cause. Hence we see the importance of knowledge to Christians, whether ministers or private members. God does not now work miracles in bestowing it upon them ; but if they possess it, he uses it as an instrument in his cause ; if they have it not, of course all that good is lost which it might have been instrumental in accomplishing. It is not reasonable to suppose that the fathers of the church, that Luther, Wesley, and men of later times, could have been instrumental in doing what they did for the church, had it not been for the learning which they acquired and consecrated to the cause. We see also the rank which knowledge must hold ; it must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. It must be *sanctified* in order to be of any service. And thus you again see, my brethren, how every thing depends on the Spirit of God. "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*"

V. *Can the success of Christianity be explained on the ground of the eloquence which it has called forth?* I know the power of eloquence is tremendous. Under its influence we behold multitudes at one time wrought up to frenzy, and at another melted into tears. Sometimes, like the mountain torrent, it seems to break down every opposing obstacle; and sometimes, like the purling rivulet, it winds itself into all the corners of the heart. If there be any thing in this world, aside from religion, to which I would bow down in humble and implicit obedience, it is eloquence. I would live upon the words of the orator, could I not live upon the words of the Saviour, and receive from his lips that bread of life, which if any man eat, he shall live for ever. But eloquence, like knowledge, cannot convert or save one sinner, and cannot therefore account for the success of Christianity. It cannot break the sinner's stubborn will, else it would long since have been broken; for it is heard throughout all nature, it is reiterated by conscience, it is echoed from every page of Holy Writ. It cannot give the falling tear that magic power which causes it to melt away all the chains of sin, and all the bars of unbelief. The Bible does indeed abound in eloquence, and its subjects are such as to call it into exercise. Men are often eloquent about the veriest trifles of time, and should not those holy men be eloquent who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," when discoursing on the solemn realities of judgment and eternity? What other lips ever glowed with the eloquence of Isaiah and David, of Stephen and Paul? And to what did they owe their eloquence? To inspiration. What caused it to affect the hearts of men? The Holy Ghost. When Peter preached so eloquently on the day of Pentecost, it was not Peter who added so many to the church, but "the Lord added daily such as should be saved." God was pleased to use Peter with all his elo-

quence as an instrument in his cause ; but, to fit him for his work, filled him with the Holy Ghost. Thus must it always be. Ministers must *consecrate* their eloquence, if they would have it instrumental in carrying on the triumphs of the cross. But the Spirit of God alone can consecrate it ; and hence again we see that it is *not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.*

From this subject we see,

1. The necessity of a pious ministry. He who ventures upon the sacred office, and stands up as an ambassador for God, without being called by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts, cannot expect that Spirit to follow his words to the hearts, and apply them to the consciences, of his hearers. He who preaches for God, and yet in his life and conduct grieves the Spirit of God, cannot expect that Spirit to return to him when he ascends the sacred desk. God does generally work by human means to carry on his cause, but rarely does he use wicked men to carry it on : he is near to them who are of “ an humble and contrite heart,” “ but he knoweth the proud afar off.” Ministers must be men “ full of the Holy Ghost.” “ *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*”

2. The necessity of a pious church. Both ministers and people must be co-workers with God. The church must sustain its ministers in the arms of their faith and prayer. When Moses, the minister of the Lord, held up his hand, Israel prevailed against Amalek ; but when his hand fell, Amalek prevailed against Israel. But the hands of Moses were heavy, therefore Aaron and Hur held them up, and Israel triumphed. The minister’s duty must always be arduous, and the church must assist him with their faithful labours ; his hands must often grow heavy, and the church must hold them up. But unless the church is pious, humble, and godly, she cannot do this ; for her sufficiency is of God alone. And if the minister’s hands

fall, what will be the consequence? When Moses' hands fell, Amalek prevailed! O Almighty God! suffer not the hands of thy ministers to fall for want of pious brethren to sustain them. I pray God to apply these solemn truths to my heart, and to the hearts of all my brethren. Let me entreat you to work for God. As you enter this sanctuary, pray for the Spirit of the Lord of hosts to enter with you; as you sit here, pray that the Spirit may sit as a refiner's fire on every heart; as you leave this place, pray that the Spirit may accompany you and all the congregation, and soften, change, and sanctify us all. Then shall Israel triumph over Amalek, heaven over hell. "NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS."

SERMON IV.

IF THOU SINNEST, WHAT DOEST THOU AGAINST HIM? OR IF THY TRANSGRESSIONS BE MULTIPLIED, WHAT DOEST THOU UNTO HIM?—Job xxxv, 6.

OUR ideas of the Deity are imperfect, and sometimes erroneous. Their imperfection is the result of our inability to comprehend his glorious character. This inability will continue to exist, in a greater or less degree, till we shall be admitted into his immediate presence, and "see him as he is." Then, disencumbered of these earthly tabernacles, we shall see with a spiritual vision, while eternity shall throw its clear and unbroken light upon the great Jehovah, and reveal to our enraptured sight his attributes, perfections, and glories.

The erroneousness of our ideas respecting the Deity results from our ignorance, which is sometimes voluntary and wilful. With the Bible before us, we need not greatly err. And yet there are individuals, even at the present day, who, notwithstanding all the light which nature and

revelation have shed around them, entertain notions of God more degrading than those of the ancient heathen philosophers. Some seem to think that he possesses but limited powers, and is, therefore, incapable of governing the wide universe, and submits it to the guidance of chance; that he cannot carry into full and perfect execution the laws which he hath made, nor exercise his sovereignty over the beings whom he hath created. Others suppose that he possesses passions like men. Because he has made use of earthly language, in the descriptions of his character which he has condescended to give us, in order that these descriptions might be adapted to our imperfect nature, they infer that he cannot love without passion, hate without malice, repent without change. Others assert that he does not hate sin with that intensity with which Christians declare he hates it: the ground of this assertion is, that sin, in their opinion, is a trifle unworthy the notice of the Creator of the universe, and that he shows indifference to their actions: "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." But, O! what presumption to measure the Creator by the creature—the infinitely holy God by an abject sinner! "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Others appear to believe that sin is a positive injury to God, that their transgressions actually harm him, and that this is the reason of his strong desires for their repentance and obedience. And perhaps some have embraced this opinion, from the fact that ministers of the gospel, in persuading men to lead holy lives, urge, as an inducement, that sin is hateful to God, and holiness pleasing in his sight. In doing this, however, we by no means inculcate the sentiment that sin is an injury to the Deity. If you

have gathered it from any of our discourses, we disclaim it; it is your own illogical inference. We urge these high and holy reasons, not to deceive you with regard to the character of our Master, but because in them are contained the strongest, the loftiest motives which can act upon the human will. We know that in labouring to please God, you act most in conformity with that reasonable nature with which he has endowed you, and add to your own character its highest dignity and brightest lustre; that your dearest interests for time and for eternity depend upon averting his wrath, and securing his favour. We have no reason to fear for God. Sin as much as you will, what injury can you do him? "*If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?*" In discoursing upon these words I propose, with divine assistance, to show you that sin cannot lessen the power, disturb the happiness, nor impair the glory of God.

I. *Sin cannot lessen the power of God.* God is a self-existent and independent being. He is also omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Such is the description of himself which he has given us in his own word. He beholds not only the actions of men, but also of individuals; he witnesses not only the outward acts, but also the motives which cause them; he gazes not only upon the countenance, but also upon the heart; entering even into the secret chambers of the soul, beholding all its passions and emotions, and reading all its thoughts: "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." He is not only in the heavens above, but also in the earth beneath: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" He has all power in heaven and in earth: "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" No

event, then, in this wide universe, takes place without his notice and his permission, for he has not only made the laws which govern both matter and mind, but is present in those laws, developing their results. Chance is a thing unknown ; all is God directing, or God permitting. No free agent acts independently of him, for from him he derives, through the medium of second causes, his intellectual and physical strength. True, he permits us to go on in the exercise of our free agency, either in the path of virtue or of vice, reserving to himself the power to overrule our actions, and to mark out the limits over which we cannot pass. All things, all creatures, all men, are then at his disposal, and he is sovereign over them all. The world is still his kingdom, though it has revolted from him ; men are still his subjects, though they are in arms against him ; but they could have no power to rebel without his permission, for he alone preserves them in existence. You may render a monarch powerless by depriving him of his resources, since these are derived either from his own subjects, or from foreign powers. But the resources of the King of kings are both underived and infinite ; how then can you diminish or exhaust them ? How can the sins of empires or of worlds subtract any thing from his omnipotence ? We may by sin impair our own powers, physical, intellectual, and moral ; we may even render society powerless for all the purposes of its institution. Thus the drunkard may spread over his countenance the hue of sallow paleness ; he may manifest the prostration of all physical energy by the trembling hand, the faltering step, and the fluttering pulse, till exhausted nature sinks into the grave ; but God is still almighty ! The debauchee may walk in the paths of licentiousness, turning his body, once beautiful and noble, into a sink of pollution, till the earth hides him from our view ; but Jehovah is still omnipotent ! The skeptic may hug infidelity to his bosom till

its fangs shall have paralyzed his conscience, maddened his will, and destroyed his affections ; but God still exists infinite in resources to reward the virtuous, and to punish the vicious. So the whole community may indulge in wickedness till its pillars are all destroyed, and the social fabric falls, to crush beneath its cumbrous weight those whom it was designed to protect ; but God still sits upon a throne, the permanency and resources of which are alike unaffected by the convulsions of the material, and the commotions of the moral world. The consequences fall on creatures, but reach not the Creator ; his position places him for ever above them all.

II. *Sin cannot disturb the happiness of God.* Jehovah is perfectly happy in his own perfections ; he was so before the creation of a single being or a single world ; he will be so for ever. The happiness of all other beings is derived from him, its exhaustless source. True, he has been pleased, in the fulness of his love, to manifest a peculiar affection for man, and a strong desire for his felicity. Hence we see him at one time leaning over Israel, and, in view of their apostacy, crying out, " O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end ! " At another, bending over Jerusalem, and giving vent to the compassionate feelings of his soul in language of moving, melting tenderness, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee ; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not ! " Hence his word, in which he assures us that he loves holiness and hates sin ; that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; that he is unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. Why, but for our sakes, does the sacred volume abound in awful threatenings and tender promises, in moving ex-

hortations and affectionate entreaties? Read on its every page the regard which Jehovah has for your welfare. See it in his works! He gives his only-begotten, well-beloved Son to die in your stead. The Father bestows his best gift upon rebels that they may be reconciled to him; the Son endures the greatest sufferings that we may be freed from sin and hell; the Holy Ghost incessantly labours to bring us back to God; the institutions and influences of the gospel are all employed to raise us to heaven. Can we doubt the ardency or sincerity of God's desires for our salvation? Hath he not done quite as much to secure it, as if it were actually necessary to his felicity? But do not hence infer that such is the fact. O no; he can do without us!

The sins of a world cannot disturb his happiness, since it is derived from himself alone; he is perfectly independent. Can the sins of man mar any of his attributes, or tarnish any of his perfections? Can they thwart any of his plans, defeat any of his purposes, annul any of his laws? These he has placed for ever beyond the power of all created beings. Between us and these he has fixed the limits of human agency: "thus far shalt thou go, but no farther." How then, I ask, can the sinner impair the bliss of God, since its source is infinitely beyond his reach? Sin affects creatures alone, and makes them miserable. I do not limit its effects to man, for the irrational creation suffers from his cruelty; nor do we know what effects the example of man's apostacy has had and may still have upon other worlds. But they are not felt in heaven.

Does the objector ask whether a benevolent God does not suffer in beholding the miseries of his creatures? Why should he, since man brings them upon himself by his own wilful disobedience? But follow out your inquiry, and you will be forced to say that the Creator is

more wretched than any of his creatures. And must not reason deny your words? The heavenly host, however, bring in their testimony, and declare that God created all things, and sustains all things in existence for his pleasure. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." The inquiry shows us clearly how limited are the objector's views of the character of God. It is necessary that we should take a more comprehensive view of his nature, and consider him in the capacity of a holy Lawgiver. Infinite wisdom, justice, and love, were all employed in making the laws by which the universe is governed; in these laws even mortals may behold these attributes of the Deity. By consequence, infinite wisdom must have foreseen distinctly all the bearings and effects of these laws upon the different orders of beings, and infinite love must have rejoiced in them; almighty power is fully sufficient to secure the existence of legitimate effects, and in these there can be nothing prejudicial or unjust. As a lawgiver, then, of unerring wisdom and boundless love, Jehovah must supremely delight in the results of law, whether they are chanted in the chiming notes of angels, or shrieked forth in the helpless moans of damned spirits! Zaleucus, the Locrian prince, delighted in the supremacy of law, though it involved the suffering of his son. The son had been condemned to lose both eyes, as the penalty for his crime. Pity prompted the father to deprive him of but one; the feelings of the lawgiver, to pluck out one of his own. And shall an earthly prince take greater delight in the results of law than the Governor of the universe? The pity of the Father prompted him to give to us his Son, that through his death we might enjoy eternal life. "To testify his affection for us, he sent down his own bowels."

But he needs not our company in heaven, nor will he suffer on account of our pains in hell!

III. *Sin cannot impair the glory of God.* God's glory is said to be promoted by the conversion of sinners, the obedience of the faithful, and the prosperity of Zion. By this, however, we mean that his glory appears greater in the sight of men. Such we believe to be the fact, and believing we rejoice. But God's glory, in itself, is neither diminished nor increased by any of the actions of men or angels. For no created beings can add to the nature of the Creator—the source of his glory. “God is the fountain of his own blessedness, the theatre of his own glory, the glass of his own beauty. One drop increases the ocean, but to God a million of worlds can add nothing.” How can you impair his glory but by impairing his nature? And that, we have shown you, you cannot touch! It is above the reach of sin! On the contrary, sin, the transgression of his law, gives new occasion for the display of his perfections; and hence, counter to the wishes of the sinner, promotes that glory which he designed to impair. This principle is beautifully developed in the inspired words of the psalmist: “The wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

Do we wish for illustrations in proof of this position? Go back to ancient days, when Egypt's proud king hardened his heart, and refused to let Jehovah's captive tribes go free. See the plagues which were sent upon the Egyptians, till their wisest magicians were overpowered and confounded before the presence of the servant of the Lord. See Jehovah multiplying his wonders in the land, till the voice of mourning over Egypt's first-born melted her monarch's heart. Behold the Israelites taking their departure; they reach the shores of the sea, when lo! the waves, dividing, form themselves in walls on either side to open a way for the hosts of God. Pharaoh, frantic

with rage, pursues them with his army ; but the prophet's wand causes the billows to unite again, and the rushing waves drown the death-notes of Egypt's sons ! But for the wrath of that haughty king, Egypt might never have witnessed those miracles which exhibited so conspicuously the glory of the Hebrews' God. That song of praise and triumph would never have ascended from Horeb's mount, nor echoed over the billowy sea : " Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods ? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ? "

See Nebuchadnezzar in his impiety erecting the golden image, and in his rage casting the Hebrew children into the " burning, fiery furnace." But lo ! they walk unhurt amid the curling flames, for the Son of God hath owned his servants, and walketh with them as their Saviour. But for the wrath of this idolater, Dura's plain might never have been graced with the presence of the Son of God ; the royal decree might never have been made that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is above all other gods.

See Darius at the mouth of the lion's den, calling upon Daniel. See Jehovah glorified in the punishment of those who raged against his prophet. But for the wrath of man, Assyria might not have owned him as her Lord.

Come down to later times, when the Jews triumphed in nailing the Messiah to the cross. That cross, they thought, would be in after times the emblem of the ignominious punishment of an impostor ; but it is the sacred emblem of the death of Him who rose from the grave that we might live. It is this which the devoted missionary carries with him as he goes to heathen lands, to proclaim " glad tidings of great joy," and to bring " life and immortality to light." It has waved in triumph over a prostrate empire—it shall wave over a conquered world ! The Jews in their wrath were but instruments in offering up

the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. And O! how has their wrath praised God! What countless multitudes on earth have already glorified him for the gift of his dear Son! and the day is fast approaching when all the inhabitants of earth shall sing the song of angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." And could we for a moment escape from these bodies, and ascend to heaven—O, could we hear the choral song of saints and angels around the throne, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," would not our ideas of his glory be brightened and enlarged!

The very sufferings of the lost will show forth the perfections of the Deity; they are the direct results of holy laws, and the direful effects of sin. And to the view of created beings in heaven, additional glory will gather around the Deity as his perfections are unfolded to their gaze. Holy beings will have stronger inducements to glorify him, because he executes his laws in discerning between the righteous and the wicked, and thus shows the justice of his character and the unchangeableness of his nature. Never, then, let us imagine that our praises are necessary to the glory of the Deity. O no! our weepings and our wailings will answer quite as well.

You see from this subject how small is the motive to sin. If what we have said be true, and for its truth we confidently appeal to both reason and revelation, your sins cannot harm the Deity. Do all you can, and "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have" you "in derision." But your sins, if continued in, will ruin you eternally. If you are determined and reckless in opposition, go forward! Gather all your resources, summon all your energies, put forth all your efforts; but remember, as they fall upon "the thick bosses of Jeho-

vah's buckler," they will rebound upon yourselves with redoubled fury! He has been perfectly disinterested in the great work of your redemption; he requires your obedience, "not that he may be happy, but liberal," and that his goodness may reward you. "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" The interest is all on your side. Hence we beg you to desist. Say, will you? We beg you in the name of Him who hath "done as much for your salvation as if his felicity were imperfect without yours." O! will you yield to our entreaties? We are not concerned for God, but we are concerned for you. Our concern, however, will soon end, for our destiny and yours will be soon fixed for ever. Blessed be God, our hearts shall not always throb thus wildly with anxiety for your welfare. But now we entreat you—"we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." For "if thou sinnest, what doest thou against him?" "He that sinneth against me," saith the Lord, "wrongeth his own soul."

SERMON V.

IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING
God.—Hebrews x, 31.

THE apostle introduces these words with great solemnity. He has been speaking of Jesus Christ as the great sacrifice once offered for the sins of the world, and has illustrated the subject by reference to those sacrifices which were offered by the Jewish priests to atone for the sins of the people. He next exhorts his brethren, in view of this subject, to approach with boldness unto God, and to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering. And then, in a comprehensive manner, he places before

them those motives to obedience which are drawn from the justice and severity of God ; closing the whole with the assertion, " It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." In this expression every word is full of meaning, and is so arranged as to arrest and fasten our attention. Whatever may be our views of the character of God, we cannot read this passage without feeling ; for there is something in it which involuntarily excites sentiments of awe. And as if to render it more impressive, the apostle has used a military phrase. It exactly expresses the condition of a man who has set himself in array against his enemy, who has fought long and hard for victory, and has had recourse to every stratagem and manoeuvre which could promise success ; but who has been overpowered by his antagonist. How dreadfully expressive is this of the condition of every sinner, and how fearfully does it intimate the doom which must fall upon him when God shall win the victory ! It is rendered still more solemn by the fact that the apostle transfers the scene of this catastrophe to eternity—eternity which is half veiled in darkness, and half illumined by the reflected light of revelation. So solemn, and so comprehensive is this passage of Holy Writ. No human lips are adequate to discuss it, and yet it stands intimately connected with our eternal happiness. Let us then implore the blessing of Almighty God while we venture to consider it. Let us ask his assistance while we endeavour to exhibit some of the reasons which render it *fearful to fall into his hands*.

I. *God is infinitely holy.* It is much to be feared that many do not reflect upon the character of God, and that many more do not reflect upon it in a proper manner. We are " of the earth, earthy." Conversant only with material things, we have but little conception of spiritual existences. Belonging to a depraved and sinful race, and

being sinful ourselves, we have but very faint ideas of infinite purity and holiness. But God is not like the sinful beings who dwell upon his footstool. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." God possesses the quality of holiness in an infinite degree, and he exhibits it in his works, and ways, and attributes; "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." The prophet had a glance of the holiness of God when he saw him "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up;" and when the seraphim over the throne "cried one unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." And it was this view which caused him, though an inspired servant of God, to cry out, "Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Now the sinner hates holiness, and this is what will render it so fearful for him to fall into the hands of a holy God. This hatred is often exhibited on earth. The sanctuary is sometimes deserted, because there is heard the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The Bible is often abused, and trodden under foot, because it condemns sin; yea, its pure and heavenly precepts are, by many, eagerly exchanged for the corrupting works of the licentious. The children of God have often been deprived of civil and religious liberty; they have been put to the torture, and burned at the stake, because they lifted up their voices against sin. Sinners vent their spite against God, by taking vengeance on his people. All this hatred to holiness has been exhibited by many men when they have possessed but very faint conceptions of the infinite degree in which this attribute exists in Jehovah. How much more then shall this be increased when they shall see with a spiritual vision; when they shall behold their

Maker face to face, and stand in the immediate presence of those flaming eyes which shall pierce the soul like a two-edged sword? If they hated him when they scarcely had even a faint idea of his holiness, how much more shall they do so when this idea shall be brightened by the awful refulgence of eternity?

Nor is this all. Were hatred confined to the breast of man alone, the effect would be less dreadful. But *sin* is the "abominable thing" which *the Lord* hateth, and "the great day of his wrath is come." He will no longer make unto the sinner manifestations of love, but of hatred; and his wrath shall wax hotter and hotter. For, as God is infinitely holy, he supremely loves virtue in all his creatures, and supremely hates vice. Even now "God is angry with the wicked every day;" but when the dispensation of mercy shall have ended, he will more signally than ever display his hatred to sin.

Look then for a moment on the picture thus presented. Here is the eternal and holy God gazing on the sinner with supreme and unchangeable hatred to sin; laying aside all the bowels of his love, and clothing himself in the fierceness of his anger. There is the weak, defenceless sinner, writhing under the searching glance of infinite holiness, and driven to anguish by a hatred to that holiness; a hatred which can never be gratified, but which must for ever prey upon himself, and for ever increase in intensity. This earth can never disclose to us one such scene, but the great day shall disclose many. Time shall not witness such terrific visions, but eternity shall gaze upon them. Judge ye, my hearers, if it be not "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

II. *God is infinitely just.* The idea of infinite justice is necessarily included in that of infinite holiness. Still it is proper to dwell upon it at length, that we may more fully comprehend the meaning of our text. And especially

is it proper to do so, since in these days God is exhibited to us chiefly in his mildest attributes of love and mercy. These should indeed lead us to repentance ; but it is much to be feared that upon many they produce no such effect, but tend rather to carelessness and sluggishness, which portend wrath to come. They do not even excite feelings of reverence and love, but seal the slumbers of many a conscience which must awake to repentance in time, or to misery in eternity. Jehovah has other attributes which are calculated to excite us to activity and diligence. Such is his infinite justice ; an attribute which he expressly appropriates to himself in his written word. In that account of his character which he condescended to give to his servant Moses, he emphatically calls himself one "that will by no means clear the guilty."

God's justice is not fully revealed in his dealings with man in this world, and the reason is evident ; this is a state of probation, not of rewards and punishments ; a dispensation of mercy, not of retributive justice. But this does not lessen the proof of his infinite justice, but rather strengthens it. There have, however, been instances, even in this dispensation of mercy, of human beings who have filled up the measure of their iniquities. The arm of justice has not only been uplifted, but has actually fallen upon the transgressor. The Most Mighty has girded his sword upon his thigh. Look into the bowels of the earth, and behold the proof of that mighty deluge which inundated it, and swept off its inhabitants ! Go seek for Sodom and the cities of the plain ! Inquire after the Jews, their temple, their city, and their nation. All, all have fallen by the stroke of justice. From what the human race has already witnessed, and from what God expressly declares himself to be, we may gain some idea of that infinite justice which he will exhibit at the final judgment.

The character of the sinner is precisely the reverse of the character of God; and hence the fearfulness of falling into his hands. The sinner has manifested his injustice in his dealings with his God, and with his fellow-men. Notwithstanding all the morality of which men boast, no unconverted man loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind; and his neighbour as himself. We have all actually robbed God of the gratitude, the obedience, and the love, which he rightfully demands; and if we have not robbed our neighbour of his property, his character, and his reputation, we have robbed him of the affection which God commands us to give him; and if these sins are unrepented of and unforgiven, they will lie at our door for ever.

Such, then, is the character of every sinner, and such the character of the God with whom he has to do. O! then, what will be his feelings when, with all his sins upon him, he shall stand before the Judge of quick and dead! What convulsive shuddering shall seize him as he reads in living characters, "*Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne!*" What anguish will rend his soul as memory shall recall the sins of a whole life, and set them before him in all the vividness of present reality! Or could memory fail in discharging her duty, a prompter, an awful prompter is at hand; for there lies the book of God's remembrance, and on its imperishable leaves are recorded the deeds he has done in the body; and for every idle word which he has spoken he must give an account. O! how shall every susceptibility of his soul be increased when, in the blazing light of eternity, he shall see, more clearly than he ever before had done, the true nature of right and wrong, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the paltry price for which he sold his soul, and the infinite majesty of the righteous God whom he has offended. How shall he tremble when the sentence of

justice shall be pronounced ; a sentence which must be comprehensive enough to embrace a punishment for every sin, and severe enough to vindicate the claims of a holy law, and the dignity of an impartial lawgiver ; a sentence which, however comprehensive and severe it may be, the sinner will feel does not, cannot exceed the demerit of his crimes ! And what excuse has he to offer ? None. What plea of extenuation can he make ? None. His mouth is stopped, and he is guilty before God ; for “ God is justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth.”

And what are the feelings of the Judge as he beholds the sinner at his bar ? He gave him a holy law, but this the sinner would not obey. He offered him pardon through the blood of atonement, on condition of repentance and faith, but this he would not accept. He wooed him with pity and love, but he turned away with contempt. He placed beacon-lights along his path to warn him of his danger, but these he would not regard. The sinner *was bent on death*. Can God then look upon him with complacency, with compassion, with love ? O no ! his justice forbids it, and he swears in his wrath, he shall not enter into his rest. “ Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh.” “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” “ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

III. *God is infinitely powerful.* Were he only a holy and just being, but incapable of manifesting his hatred to sin, and of executing the demands of justice, the sinner's condition would be far more tolerable. He is, however, not only the Judge, but the executioner, clothed with the armour of omnipotence. “ If I whet my glittering sword,

and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me ;” “neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.” “God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.” It is manifest in the formation of our world, and in the formation of the wide universe. “He spake, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast.” Who, but an omnipotent God, could call into existence world after world, and fill them with an endless variety of animate and inanimate objects ? Who, but an omnipotent God, could sustain these worlds in existence with all their countless inhabitants, could place them in their separate orbits, and appoint unto them their bounds, and the times of their revolutions ? Who, but an omnipotent God, can destroy what omnipotence hath created ? Look where you will, into the vast and the minute, both in the material and immaterial world, and you cannot but see the agency of omnipotence. “Lo, these are parts of his ways ; but how little a portion is heard of him ? but the thunder of his power who can understand ?”

How much more gloriously and fearfully shall this omnipotence be displayed when “the shadows of time shall have flitted away, and the light of eternity shall break in upon our open vision !” How much of his omnipotence he will then exert we do not know ; but this we know, that his power will awake the sleeper, whether in the bosom of earth, or in the unfathomed caves of ocean. It will animate the lifeless clay, and join bone to bone, limb to limb, and soul to body, and bid the man arise, and come to judgment. The sinner may have turned a deaf ear to the voice of an entreating Saviour, but he cannot turn a deaf ear to that Saviour when he appears as Judge. He may have slighted the invitations of mercy, but he cannot slight the summons of the judgment-trumpet.

God's power shall chain the sinner to his bar while the great trial is pending, and while his flaming eyes dart through him, rending his soul with bitterest anguish; it shall prevent the rocks and mountains from falling on him, and hiding him from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; it shall set fire to this world in which he has lived in wantonness; it shall change his material into a spiritual body, possessing new susceptibilities for suffering, and an unthought-of ability of enduring the whole weight of his anger; it shall stamp upon it the impress of eternity—an impress which neither suffering nor anguish can efface—and bid it live for ever with its immortal companion, the sinful soul. God's omnipotence shall put into full and terrible execution the sentence which his justice shall pronounce. It shall drive the sinner from hope and mercy, and give him over to despair—to “weeping and gnashing of teeth”—to “the worm that dieth not.” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” because that God is omnipotent. There can be no resistance, no escape for ever and ever. But I leave this topic; it is too awful to dwell upon longer. Yet, O! let us ask ourselves in passing, If the mere thought of this suffering be so painful, what must be the suffering itself?

IV. “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,*” because there will be then nothing to prevent the full exercise of his infinite holiness, justice, and power against us. The Bible nowhere gives us any ground to infer that there will be any other state of probation than that which this life secures. On the contrary, it authorizes us to believe that death ends our probation, and that our accounts will then be sealed up to the judgment of the great day. Then he that is unjust will be unjust still: and he that is filthy will be filthy still: and he that is righteous will be righteous still: and he that is holy will be holy still. At

that day we shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body. The body we shall leave in the grave, there to slumber till the resurrection morning; and when that morning shall dawn upon us, the dispensation of mercy as it respects the whole human family will be closed for ever. Yes, the apostle assures us that the Saviour will then resign his mediatorial office, and deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father.

The dispensation of mercy having past, that of justice will follow; for this, the dispensation of rewards and punishments, the revelator assures us, will open with the dawning of the resurrection. God shall then "reward every man according to his works." Mercy can no longer interfere, and justice knows no mercy. The blessed Saviour has hitherto acted as our intercessor before the throne of his Father, but he can do so no longer. When the arm of justice was uplifted to destroy us, he interposed and cried, Spare them, Father, yet a little longer. Yea, he himself bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, but he can do so no more for ever. There is no longer any days-man between the sinner and his God, who can lay his hand upon them both. No, his meek, forgiving, interceding Jesus is now transformed into a Judge, stern and inflexible. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Yes, the Mediator's character is lost in that of the Judge, and God is not now "in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but is "a consuming fire."

The dispensation of mercy having ended, and that of justice having opened; the Mediator having resigned his office, and God having assumed all his severity; what shall prevent the full exercise of his holiness, justice, and omnipotence? What shall prevent our drinking of "the

wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation?" O! it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a holy, a just, an omnipotent, and unchanging God. These his attributes, while they comprise every circumstance which can render the happiness of the blessed desirable, comprise every circumstance which can render the misery of the lost indescribably awful. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Christian brethren, are these things so? Is it really true that all these things are in reserve for that day, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Yes, we profess to believe it, frightful and appalling as it is. What, then, are we doing? Are we praying for sinners who are exposed to all this weight of wo? Are we exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come? Do we feel for them any of that compassion which Jehovah felt when he foresaw the wickedness and misery of Israel, and cried out, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end?" O! let us be up and doing, working while the day lasts. We may, if faithful, be instrumental in plucking one brand from the everlasting burnings. How laudable the object! How worthy our constant and untiring exertions!

Impenitent friends, we have no other motive in preaching to you "the terror of the Lord" than a desire to persuade you to be reconciled to God. Far more pleasant would it be for us to exhibit to you his unbounded condescension, his surpassing kindness, and his infinite love. We sometimes endeavour to place before you these attributes in all their loveliness, that you may be induced to love him who has first loved you. But, alas! these in-

ducements frequently fail to produce in you a change from sin to holiness, from hatred to love. Still it would be more pleasant for us to dwell upon such topics alone, were it consistent with our duty to ourselves, our God, and you. But we must warn the wicked of his danger, that his blood be not required at our hands. We must not hesitate "to declare unto you all the counsel of God," as far as it is revealed unto us, that God may appear just and holy in all his ways. We must "set before you life and death, blessing and cursing," that you may not rise up in the judgment, and point at us your finger, and say, "You did not warn me! You did not warn me!" We preach to you in kindness, though we must preach to you plainly. We realize, in some degree, your awful danger of falling into the hands of the living God, and we feel for you. Yes, the church feels for you. O! will you feel for yourselves? Will you think of these things? Will you lay your plans for death and judgment? Will you live and act for eternity, as well as for time? Will you flee from the wrath to come? Blessed be God, you are still in a state of probation, your day of grace has not yet past, the door of mercy is still open. O run! run for your life! Enter in, and be saved from falling into the hands of the living God!

NOTES OF SERMONS.

I.

IF THY PRESENCE GO NOT WITH ME, CARRY US NOT UP HENCE.—
Exodus xxxiii, 15.

SUCH was the language of Moses when commanded to go before the tribes of Israel to the promised land. He had but recently descended the awful mount where he had received the law, and held communion with Jehovah. The Israelites, having grown impatient at his delay, had revolted from God. The painful news had been communicated to him by God, joined with fearful intimations of coming vengeance. Grief and anger swelled the bosom of Moses, and he felt that he was the shepherd of a wandering, wayward flock. The sons of Levi alone gathered around him, and, by divine command, went forth to the slaughter of Israel. But rivers of blood could not wash away the sin, nor appease God's anger. He issued the order, "Depart, and go up hence," &c., Exod. xxxiii, 1-3. Well might Moses hesitate and inquire, "Wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us?" Exod. xxxiii, 16, saying, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." The Christian minister may with propriety adopt this language as he goes to the field of labour which Providence has assigned to him. This will appear obvious if you consider,

I. *The nature of the work which he is called to perform.*

He is sent not to instruct men in the arts or sciences, not to lead them through the green paths of literature, or the stormy scenes of political life. These he might engage in with no fears, and pursue without divine assist-

ance. His is a greater work; to teach men the science of salvation—the plan of mercy—to watch over them, and lead them from the brink of hell to the gate of heaven! Hence Mark xvi, 15; Acts xx, 28; and 2 Tim. iv, 1, 2. He is then to labour for,

1. The awakening and conversion of sinners. Wherever he goes he will find them insensible, asleep; his is the task to arouse, invite, and urge them, by all that is tender and awful, and to lead them to the hallowed cross.

2. The edification and sanctification of believers. When they are converted, his labour is but just begun; they are weak, tempted, and afflicted. He is their shepherd and guide—responsible in some degree, and freed from this responsibility only when he or they are removed from each other, or from the earth. Would you know the labours this work imposes? Learn them from the lives of Christ and his apostles, and from the nature of the work itself. There is no ease, no trifling, for eternity is at stake!

II. *The difficulties that lie in his way.*

Some of them are,

1. The coldness of Christians. These ought to be, and usually are, his fellow-labourers. Sometimes, however, they are tardy and slothful. The world, the flesh, and Satan, interfere with their duties; they do not labour with all their souls. Sometimes they fall into sin—into apostacy—disgrace the cause, and grieve God.

2. The hostility of the human heart to God and holy things. This is the doctrine of the Bible, the experience of the world. Our message is unpleasant, our truths unwelcome, and man rouses up to repel, refute, and cavil. O sin, how hast thou blinded and maddened the human race!

3. Love of the world and sin. “I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.” Yes, the whole soul is wedded to sin, and its affections glued to earth. We come to

divorce and sever; will it be strange if this prove difficult? We come not to possess an unoccupied, but to repossess an inhabited land. Need we not an angel to go before us?

4. The opposition of Satan. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Powers of darkness combine to oppose us! Fearful host! Strong, artful, and malicious; how various and complicated their means of assault! Man, noble, dignified, is too often their victim.

III. *The smallness of his own resources.*

Health sometimes forsakes him, and his body lies exhausted and nerveless under excessive labour. Will not every faithful minister die at last a martyr? The mind, too, loses its strength and elasticity through care, anxiety, trouble, and sickness. This is but a fair picture of man. O how few and feeble his powers! And what, I ask, is a perfect man to this great work—a work which "filled a Saviour's hands?" What are splendid talents? They cannot save one soul! What is moving, melting eloquence? It cannot draw the worldling from his idols; it cannot break the chains of sin. Summon all our resources, they are inadequate to the mighty work of saving souls. "*Our sufficiency is of God.*" "*The excellency of the power is of God, and not of us.*" If there be one revealed truth clearer than another it is this. With deep and impassioned feeling, then, may we not say in the words of the text, "*If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence?*" It is the language of my soul. "My presence shall go with thee." Kind assurance! is it already given? O that that presence might to-day be manifested in power and glory in this assembly! O that it may overshadow this sacred desk, as the cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat!

II.

WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.—Eph. ii, 12.

SUCH is a part of Paul's description of the Gentiles. It was an affirmation made of all, whatever might have been their degree of civilization or degradation. It included alike the polished Athenian and the barbarous Scythian. The same description is equally applicable to every careless sinner at the present day, except in one particular, viz., he has a theoretical knowledge of God, which the heathen had not. It is this knowledge, and the effects resulting from it, which distinguish us from the heathen. Yes, be it remembered, that it is to revelation we are indebted for the untold blessings of our social organization. Still, every careless sinner is a practical atheist. This is indeed a hard saying, and I would it could be softened consistently with truth. But consider the facts of the case, and then decide for yourselves in view of God's word. He is without God,

I. *In his thoughts.* The Bible, in the descriptions which it gives of the righteous, takes special notice of the state of the mind. It dwells upon the thoughts. Now its description of the wicked is, "God is not in all his thoughts." "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." "How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." The thoughts of the sinner are engrossed with the affairs of this world. His mind is wholly occupied with its cares, business, and pleasures. It may be drawn to other objects in the sanctuary, and in times of affliction; but is it not partially, and unwillingly drawn? Is not the world brought

into the sanctuary? How often do you seriously reflect on your own nature and destiny? on the claims, the love, and the justice of God? Can you say, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand?" It is a melancholy fact that these subjects are excluded from the mind. Hence God exclaims, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number." "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

II. *In his motives.* The great motive in the gospel is, "the glory of God." No man can claim to be a Christian who is not, in a good degree, influenced by it; all other holy motives are only streams from this. Now it is the motive which determines, in God's sight, the character of actions. That only is right which finds its ultimate motive in the glory of God. "It is God's command," says the saint, "hence I obey." Selfishness, benevolence, friendship, patriotism, operate in the sinner's heart. Many of the acts which proceed from them may be great public or social virtues, but here they end. They are not the works of faith, nor will they commend us to God. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Have you at any time, before or after an action, asked, "Will this promote God's glory?" If not, can you then claim him as your spring of action?

III. *In his desires.* The language of the Christian is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The corresponding action is, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee." The language of the sinner is, "Depart from us;

for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "We will not have this man to reign over us." "Go thy way for this time." Nor is the feeling which prompts this language changed, till he beholds his danger, and his heart is melted. Why need I dwell here? Does not your experience prove my words? Do you now desire God? Deal plainly with yourself. Are you seeking him? If not, surely then you desire him not.

IV. *In his enjoyments.* We derive enjoyment from the past, the present, and the future. In a review of *the past*, do you receive pleasure from God's dealings with you, from your own emotions, (for you can recall convictions and vows,) and from your seasons of prayer? These are sweet to the saint; hence he speaks of them. But are they not arrows to your soul? And do your *present* enjoyments flow from reading the Bible, from prayer, from love to God? Have you not, on the contrary, an aversion to these duties? Do you expect any enjoyment from them? Are not your pleasures sensual, social, or intellectual? Candour says, Yes. You say you *anticipate* heaven with joy. But is it so? It is fashionable to talk of going there—poetry and fiction dwell upon its loveliness—but the poet's is not the saint's heaven. God has also so revealed heaven that we cannot despise it; but we may not view it rightly. Do you feel happy in the thought of a heaven whose pleasures are holy and spiritual? Do you love its King, its inhabitants, its occupations? If you *expect* to love them, why not love them now? It is God who makes heaven dear to the saint.

"Not all the harps above
Can make a heavenly place,
If God his residence remove,
Or but conceal his face."

Let me be anywhere with God; *where he is*, is heaven. Again, would you not live here always? Many would.

Could sickness and death be done away, could the arts and sciences flourish, would you not covet the privilege? It is a mercy that we are to choose between heaven and hell!

Are you not, then, without God in all these respects? And, in conclusion, let me ask,

1. In what do you differ from atheists? You start, and I admit a difference in almost every thing which makes a good citizen. But in the view of the Bible, what is the difference? What have you to commend you to God which they have not? You have a belief in him; but is it of any practical value? Do not "the devils also believe, and tremble?" Be assured, it will not save you from condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." You have a fear of him. But what is its nature, filial or slavish? Would not the former lead you to obedience? Is not the latter possessed by the lost? What, then, in the sight of God, and in its bearing on your future destiny, is the difference? I can see none. It becomes me to remind you,

2. That if you remain without God in this world, you must remain so for ever. O! fearful state! Without Him, as he constitutes the felicity of the redeemed, but not as he completes the misery of the lost!

III.

MY PEOPLE DOETH NOT CONSIDER.—Isaiah i, 3.

THERE is peculiar beauty in this affecting language of Jehovah. It reveals to us traits of character which ought to endear him to our hearts. It is the language of a kind father, affectionate almost to tears, beholding the recklessness of his children, and mourning over its awful conse-

quences. How sad the picture of our race which it presents ! We see them straying—the tempest threatening—God entreating—but all in vain. We suffer in comparison with the brutes. “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.” I propose to prove the assertion of the text by a brief reference to the views and actions of men respecting religion. And that you may fully understand me, I would here observe, that all my remarks will be based on the fact that we are intelligent beings, gifted with judgment and reason. Hence, sufficient light and reflection on any subject will lead to opinions, and these to their legitimate effects in action. Let us consider,

I. *The views which men have of religion.*

I wish not to think or speak disparagingly of our age, nor overlook its many glories. It is an age of enterprise, philanthropy, and Christian exertion. Still it is an age of conflict, in which these virtues are called to contend with their opposites ; an age of troubled elements, where all is commotion. One may safely predict, from present movements in the moral world, that we are on the eve of great events—that the opposing forces of Christ and Belial will not, in the next age, be as equally matched as they now are, but that victories are to be gained which will give the predominance to one of the parties. You see, then, that I believe the views of many at the present day to be against religion. Without much effort we find avowed atheists and deists, who view Christianity as an imposition, and who cavil openly at every thing that is holy. And to what is this attributable but inconsideration ? Is there want of evidence in proof of the existence of the Deity, and of the authenticity of revelation ? Man’s reason proves the existence of God—all nations have believed in fate, or some overruling power—nature and providence are both inexplicable on any other sup-

position. Revelation has been made morally certain by evidence. Notwithstanding the thousand volumes which infidelity has written, the truth is still unobscured; like the sun, it outshines these stars of night. Paley and Butler infidelity has not dared assail. Why have not men embraced the truth? Is it not because they have not considered it? Has not this been the dying confession of infidelity? What stronger proof of inconsideration than skeptical young men furnish can you ask?

We bring as proof the views of many nominal Christians. I pass over the many who reject vital truths, as it must be admitted that fashion and inclination, not prayerful consideration, lead them on. Would they consider, they would see that they were robbing religion of its life, Christ of his glory, and heaven of its allurements. But why the obscurity of the views of many on vital points? How few of my hearers can explain the scheme of salvation; can tell how a sinner may be justified! How few know how to begin to seek religion—how to repent and believe! We have to explain these anew to every penitent. Now the Bible is clear on these points—preaching frequent—but, alas! your attention is drawn to other objects. You do not view this knowledge as essential now, and hence labour not to attain it. “My people doth not consider.”

II. *Their actions in reference to it.*

It will readily be admitted that many live as if there were no God, and no hereafter. Some are openly impious, restrained only by society; others have no regard for God, however moral their lives. Now all this would do, if they had proved the Bible to be false, and religion a fable; but do they consider that they have demonstrated neither to be false, and that both may prove true in the end? Do they reflect on the interests at stake—interests so vast that nothing short of demonstration will justify

their conduct? They care not to think of these things; they will not.

1. Look especially at the apparent unconcern with which nominal Christians continue in sin. The indifference of even true Christians to religion is matter of surprise to infidels. "How different would be your actions," say they, "did you really believe in Christianity." Much more surprising, however, are the actions of sinners. Some live in commission of outbreking sins, and seem to feel no great anxiety, except on extraordinary occasions which bring them to reflection. Others are outwardly moral; but who knows their secret sins? And even these live in open violation of the great law which requires them to love and serve God. Both classes are sinners in God's sight. Both profess fully to believe his word. If their profession be sincere, *what* then do they believe? Why, that "sin" is "exceeding sinful"—the "abominable thing" which God hates—that it is contempt of infinite mercy, justice, and power—that it exposes the soul to eternal death—that every sin goes to judgment—that for every sin they will be punished. And yet they go on in sin without anxiety in view of all this, and professing to believe all this! Can they consider when they do so, or do they disbelieve? Here is your dilemma; which horn will you take?

2. Look at the ease with which they defer repentance and faith. Numerous, you know, are the instances of individuals who, day after day, for years, thus procrastinate. They engage in business and pleasure, and neglect religion. The excuses which they offer for this neglect are all unreasonable; such as, "I have not time;" "I am too young;" "People will laugh at me," &c. The motives which influence them are love of the world and sin, and the gratification of their appetites and passions. All is summed up here. Now they profess to believe that the

pleasures of sin are unsatisfying and transient—that religion is absolutely necessary to present and future happiness—that life is uncertain—that every call may be the last—that the Spirit may be grieved away for ever! And yet we cannot prevail upon them to embrace religion. We beg and plead, but they still procrastinate! Heaven waits and pleads, reason expostulates, and conscience alarms; but they leave the sanctuary, and defer attention to the salvation of their souls. O, alarming proof of the assertion of the text.

But I am satisfied that you are fully convinced that the complaint of God is just. In the proof of this inconsideration which I have spread before you, you see also its awful effects. Say, will you, with the assistance of divine grace, now prevent them? Consideration is the first step to religion. “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.” I cannot but fear that some of you will remain inconsiderate—leave the house, as you have often done, without seeking God—become absorbed in the world and pleasure—and put far away the evil day. I fear that accidents and sickness will overtake you, and that, without time for reflection, you will be hurried away. But what more can I do? What can I say to move you? “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!”

IV.

FOLLOW ME.—Matt. ix, 9.

How wonderful that the Saviour should have chosen publicans and fishermen to be his disciples! As if in contempt of human pride, he passed by the wise, and selected the simple. This was not earthly, but heavenly

wisdom. The manner in which he called them was also wonderful. He offered no explanations, no inducements, but gave them the brief command, "Follow me." The Saviour now makes this demand of every man. What is implied in it?

I. *That we should forsake every thing else.*

The disciples were to forsake their homes, friends, and occupations, and lead the lives of wanderers. Why? They were to be the witnesses of the life and works of Christ, to learn their divinity from his lips, and to be sent forth as his apostles. *We are to forsake every thing as the principal object of pursuit, or means of pleasure, and to seek our happiness in serving and loving Christ.* "Follow me" implies all this.

1. *Worldly business.* Unconverted men make this a principal object of pursuit, independent of God's claims and laws. They do so solely for their own good, and that of their families. The gospel requires us to make business a minor object. We are to labour to support ourselves and those dependant on us, because God commands it. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." We are to consider ourselves not as owners, but as stewards. Mark x, 21.

2. *Worldly pleasures.* Men make these the objects of pursuit and principal means of happiness. We are to abstain entirely from those which are sinful. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." We are to indulge in those which are innocent as means of happiness in a subordinate degree only. Our highest and chief pleasure must be from Christ. Hence we are to live as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." We are to mortify our members, crucify our affections.

3. *Our friends.* Many live for the happiness of their friends, and love them above all other objects. But "he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy

of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." " If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Our supreme affections must not be placed on our friends. Our love for them must not interfere with our duties ; we must not go with them into sin, must not gratify their sinful desires.

We are to live for Christ alone. Our apparent worldly interests must be opposed, our inclinations denied, if they contravene the will of God. Hence we must follow the Saviour through evil report, through persecution, through martyrdom : "*Yea, and his own life also !*" Our interests are in another world. " What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?" Yes, if we are the real followers of Christ we have no interests in this world, for they are transferred to another ; we have no treasures on earth, for they are laid up in heaven. Our all is in an ark which is afloat upon the troubled waters of the sea of life ; if it founder, our *all* is lost for ever ; if it ride triumphantly through the storms and over the billows, and land at last upon the mount of God, our *all* is saved eternally.

II. *That we should imitate his example.*

This, in part, is included in the foregoing, but it deserves more consideration. Christ is our perfect exemplar, and as such we must follow him,

1. In patient suffering. To how much suffering was he exposed, and no murmur escaped his lips. You may suffer in your person by disease, in your character by calumny, in your family by death, in your property by fraud ; but you are never to complain. He permits suffering for your highest good.

2. In cheerful forgiveness. How many occasions had the Saviour for the exercise of forgiveness, and how

cheerfully did he forgive ! You will have many, and will be required to imitate him, if you would follow him.

3. In active benevolence. Thus Christ came down from heaven, suffered, and died. Active benevolence was the characteristic of his whole life. You must imitate him in relieving men's temporal wants by charity, advice, and instruction. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this ; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Remember the stress which is laid on this point in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and the Epistle of James. You must administer to men's spiritual wants by praying for them, and exhorting them to embrace religion. What a field for action among your friends and in the world ! All of you, in a certain sense, are to be preachers, if you would follow Christ.

In conclusion, there is a brighter side to this subject. You are to follow the Saviour,

Through death. Painful as death is to sinners, it is sweet to Christians. Christ has taken away its sting. It is the gate to Paradise. He hath gone through it. I bless God, I may follow him.

Through the grave. Christ hath taken away its victory. His resurrection is a pledge of ours. He rose with a spiritual body, and we may follow him. Praised be God.

To heaven. The Saviour calls on us to follow him not only in his sufferings, but also in his joys. When on earth he said, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." We, my brethren, have been accustomed to consider this statement as referring only to our sufferings for his sake, and have, perhaps, reluctantly assented to its truth. But we should extend our view over a wider field, and contemplate its bearing on eternity. O ! if we shall ever reach heaven, and see the glory which our Saviour "had with the Father before the

world was," our full hearts shall cry out in transport, "Yea, Lord, *it is enough* for the disciple that he be *as* his Master, and the servant *as* his Lord." Heaven he has prepared for us by his death. He will be our leader there, and we shall, if we follow him here, follow him there through its paths of bliss. No wonder Paul could say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." God help us to follow Christ.

V.

MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN.—Matt. xxii, 14.

THUS ends the parable of the wedding feast. The feast of the gospel is now provided for us. How pleasing to know that many are called to be guests! Yet how painful the thought that so few are chosen—that so many will finally be shut out of heaven!

I. *Let us prove the assertion of the text.*

How many of this congregation have been called during the past year? How many before? Compute the number. Now consider how few have been converted. Is not the comparative number small? How many have been called in this city, (Salem,) containing fifteen thousand inhabitants? Almost all these have heard the gospel. How many Christians are there here? Count for yourselves. Is one-seventh part chosen?

The gospel has been preached throughout this wide country, and millions have been called; but the comparative number of Christians is very small. So it is with Christendom at large. Saints are far from being the majority. Thus has it always been. Christ called many, but chose few. The apostles preached all over the then known world; but read the history of their lives, and you will find that their followers were comparatively few.

II. *Let us show the reason why so few of the called are chosen.*

If we take the parable for our guide, the answer is obvious. Those invited would not come; the one cast out would not wear the wedding garment which had been provided. The fault was theirs alone. Aside from the parable let us consider the question, Why are so many of the called not chosen? What more interesting or important question can be asked? We must look for the answer in the unwillingness of God, or in the inability or unwillingness of man. Nowhere else can the reason be found.

1. Is God unwilling to choose them? If so, why does he call them? To mock them? Would this be consistent with benevolence? Speak not of irresistible calls, for the Bible never does. On the contrary, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." No passages can be found opposed to these.

Again, God has made an atonement for all men. "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." God hath provided a remedy

for the whole human race. He hath sent his Spirit to all, reproving "*the world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." That Spirit proves alike effectual to all who yield to him.

2. Is man unable to obtain the qualification requisite to his being chosen? Naturally he is. But Christ "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," &c. Hence your ability through the grace of God. On this ground alone are you commanded to come to God. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." This command is of universal applicability.

3. Man then must be unwilling. This is the great reason. Such is the doctrine of the Bible. He knows that he cannot be chosen without the wedding garment, but he will not go to Christ for it. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

It is not then a necessary consequence that "but few are chosen;" it is a contingent event. Your election is left entirely with yourselves. Were it not so, you could be neither innocent nor guilty.

1. How suitable, my brethren, for us to ask, Are we chosen? Many who are in the church here may not be admitted to the church above. Our membership here will not secure us a place there. If chosen, how obedient should we be, that we may not be cut off!

2. Impenitent hearers, can you deny that you have been called? Do you not feel condemned for not hearing? God calls again: "Come, for all things are now ready." "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Will you hear? How many more times do you expect to be called? What would you give in death for one call more?

VI.

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE.—John v, 40.

OUR text, if carefully analyzed, unfolds four distinct ideas : 1. That we are, by nature, in a state of spiritual death, exposed to eternal death. 2. That Christ is the only dispenser of spiritual and everlasting life. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” 3. That he requires of those who wish to escape the former, and to embrace the latter, to come to him. 4. That the great obstacle in the way is in man himself; that is, in his will. The Saviour seems to have anticipated the whole host of objections which men would offer, drawn from the nature and amount of evidence, &c., and by one step to have placed himself in advance of them all. He throws all blame from himself, and lays it where it belongs, at the sinner’s door. It is well to reflect before reflection will be useless—to consider the reasons which we have for refusing to come to Christ. That we may do so, I will adduce a few of the many facts which show that the will of the sinner is perverse.

I. *It is opposed to reason.*

The excuses which sinners urge are not sufficient to justify their determination to neglect or despise religion. The sinner says,

1. “I do not need religion.” In all your past lives, conscience has proved this assertion false. Your actions, in framing a system to carry you to heaven, have denied it. Men in all ages have had a religion of some kind; the sentiment of religion is engrafted in our nature, and we cannot live without it. But the assertion charges God with folly in providing and promulgating, at so great a price, that which you do not need. He is not prodigal of means, as his works testify.

2. "I have other matters to engage my attention." Now you mean, 1. That these are more important than religion, or, 2. That they are opposed to it. If you mean the first, it amounts to this; that time is more valuable than eternity—the body than the soul. Look at it and ask, Is this reason? If you mean the second, then those "other matters" must be sinful, and, of course, unnecessary, as religion provides for all necessary pursuits. To permit things unnecessary to prevent our attending to those which are necessary—is this reason?

"O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!"

3. "I do not believe the Bible." Is this reasonable? Must you not reject all history on the same ground? Yes, but you do not. Take the creation and the deluge as proof of its inspiration, and is not unbelief greater credulity than belief? All unbelievers, total and partial, admit that religion can do them no harm; it is of infinite importance if the Bible be true, for, without it, they must be for ever miserable. If therefore there were a thousand chances that they would not suffer without it, and one only that they would suffer, in view of the greatness of that suffering, reason would prompt them to embrace religion, and thus be on the safe side. But what unbeliever regards it?

II. *It is opposed to his highest interest.*

It is our highest interest, as individuals and as social beings, to possess religion, for it makes us happy and useful in all circumstances. Every approximation to its principles is an approximation to our real interest. The temperance reform proves this conclusively. So of other moral enterprises. Religion tends to abolish wars, &c., for it is "good will toward men." The more it is diffused, the more harmony and love prevail.

This, however, is a partial view of the case. Man is

immortal, and bound by reason to act in reference to his whole existence—especially to that part which lies beyond the grave. Now the sinner's will is most emphatically opposed to his highest interest considered in this enlarged view; for it drives him from heaven, and confines him in hell. The strongest motive, if there be sense in words, is drawn from the highest interest, which is our future, eternal happiness. You see, then, that the will of the sinner, made to yield to motive, is influenced, not by the strongest, but by the weakest motives. What would you think of scales that should turn so? There has been foul play with them, you would say. What think you of our will, which turns not by the interests of heaven and hell, but by the veriest trifles of time? May it not at last weigh out to us eternal death?

III. *Christ has come to us.*

Among foes, if one meet another half way, reason would prompt to meet him; but if he should come the whole way, it would be base to refuse to see him! Christ came the whole way—removing obstacles—making a smooth path even to our feet—and we refuse to treat with him!

1. It would have been a manifestation of great love to come in any way, since he is the Sovereign, we the rebels. But he came *in person*, not by an ambassador. He came, making a sacrifice of heaven with all its glories. He came to heap upon us his favors—to take us to himself. Are not these reasons which should influence us to come to him?

2. He comes in his word, abounding in instruction, persuasion, and love. He comes in every minister, his ambassador. It was much to come once, but how often does he come! Yet the sequel is, "*Ye will not come to me!*"

3. He comes by his Spirit. The Spirit impresses his

word and providences. His Spirit comes, too, under the greatest discouragements, unasked, repulsed, and grieved. Yet, after all, the assertion of the text is true. From this subject we see,

1. How universal and fearful are the ravages of sin. It has depraved us all. Many do finally refuse and go away. All refuse for a time. A moment's delay were too long. How fearful the moral aspect of man! What spectacles of horror are exhibited to the universe! If the inhabitants of the bright worlds above can learn nothing else from human apostacy and divine redemption, they may assuredly learn this—the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The human heart, with its blackening shades of perversity, may be the sad picture which is hung out to the view of unsinning worlds, to preserve their allegiance to the Deity.

2. We learn what we must do. We must change our will. God has left it free, and proffers his aid. Do you say you cannot change your will? Your life gives you the lie. Why do you live so unconcerned if this be your condition? For a change of your will is necessary to salvation; and, as God has left the will free, unless you change it, your awful destiny is sealed! Belshazzar trembled when he saw that his doom was fixed; why do you not tremble in view of your destiny? Dare you avow to God, on the bended knee, that you cannot, with divine aid, change your will? If not, away then with the pretext for ever.

VII.

THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.—John xv, 25.

“THEY that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head,” (Psalm lxix, 4,) was the prophetic language of Christ by the mouth of David, and its repetition in the text is its direct application to the Jews. And when you consider his innocent, unassuming, upright life—his forced trial before Pilate—and their cruel persecution of him even to death, you will admit that the prophecy has been painfully fulfilled. Like many other prophecies, it overreaches the first event which it foretold, and meets its further fulfilment in later times. Every nation in Christendom has reared its monument to the truth of the text. We all have been, and many of us now are, living proofs of the fulfilment of this prophecy, and to us its application is direct. We shall not labour to prove that sinners hate Christ. It is a revealed truth. John vii, 7 ; xv, 18. Nor shall we show the various ways in which this hatred is exhibited ; but rather strive to convince you that it is “ without a cause.”

I. *Is there any thing in Christ's character deserving your hatred ?*

That character is clearly shown us in his written word, and should be carefully studied. We may view it in different lights.

As a private man he was humble and unostentatious. He was obedient to the national and ceremonial law. Witness his payment of tribute, and his baptism. He was kind to his parents. Luke ii, 51 ; John xix, 26.

As a philanthropist his character is glorious. He beheld the sufferings of a world, considered their cause, and undertook their relief. He showed men the true cause of all evil in the world, sin ; and prescribed rules

for every relation in life, obedience to which would remedy all evil. He "*went about doing good.*" He did good even to his enemies ; did it unrewarded, unthanked, and at the expense of every comfort.

As a Saviour he loved the world when it was his enemy, died for us when we were unworthy to be saved. This he did disinterestedly, as it could not increase his happiness or glory—at the expense of happiness and glory—through extreme and unearthly suffering. Now consider yourself not an object of this love, but a beholder of its wonderful exhibition, and what is there in it to cause your hatred ? Could you hate one of your fellow-men should he exhibit such a love ?

As God, you find him the source of wisdom, benevolence, justice, holiness, power. Omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence are terms which convey but a faint idea of his glorious character. Reflect upon his attributes, and what in them can move your hatred ? The best of men have loved him as "*altogether lovely*;" the highest intelligences above are wholly wrapped up in his love. On what attribute do you specially fix your hatred ? Is it not his holiness ? Why should this cause your hatred ? This is the chief, the regulator of them all. Were God unholy, what misrule, what partiality, what misery, would prevail through his dominions ! As rational, as moral beings, you ought to love him chiefly for his holiness, the source of all his excellences.

II. *Is there any thing in his actions toward you personally which merits your hatred ?*

You have viewed Christ abstractly, now look at him in connection with yourself. He hath given you every temporal blessing which you enjoy, and hath distinguished you above others. He hath died for you, from pure love for your good ! O ! can you hate him for this ? He gives you the means of grace, promises of mercy, strivings of

the Spirit, only to make you happy. He intercedes for you before the throne. At what in all this can you complain? Say you he afflicts? You deserve hell; why then complain of afflictions? He sends them to save you from endless wo. Still you hate him! O, causeless hatred!

III. *Are his purposes concerning you deserving your hatred?*

His design in your creation was not to trifle with you, but to make you happy. That design *we* defeated, and here he might have left us. But he interposed by redemption to bring about the purposes of creation. Heaven he "prepared for you from the foundation of the world." When you shut its gates, he opened them by his blood, and made them easy of access. He designs to raise you to heaven; hence his word and works. There he will give you triumph over all the evils of this present state. You may thwart his design, and abide the doom. You are in sin, and, unrepenting, you must die in sin, and be for ever miserable. The natural consequence of sin is misery, and he will not relieve you. He must punish sin, because it is essentially and eternally wrong. He will banish you from himself, and send you to hell. He must do this; 1. To be impartial in government. All holy beings demand it, and he is pledged to do it. 2. To prevent you from marring the happiness of heaven. You would destroy it all. There is then nothing in his purposes concerning you to merit your hatred. We infer from this subject,

1. *The depravity of the human heart.* It can find no fault with Christ, and yet it hates him. We hate the benefactor who has died for our happiness. We hate Him whom angels love, and all heaven adores.

2. *How great will be the punishment which God will finally inflict!* You will be weighed in the scales of

justice. Consider the circumstances, and what must be your doom? I charge you with hating Christ without a cause. "*They hated me without a cause!*" O how dismally will these words fall upon your ears at the last day! They will toll the dirge of your eternal death!

VIII.

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE MORE TO MY VINEYARD, THAT I HAVE NOT DONE IN IT?—Isaiah v, 4.

THESE words were addressed to the Jews, whom God had chosen as his people, and favoured with special temporal and spiritual blessings. He had separated them from other nations, had been their Ruler, and had given them his law and prophets. They were a vineyard cultivated by him, but they often brought forth wild grapes—the fruit of sin. Before visiting them with judgments, he made to them this appeal: "O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" We as a people have been highly favoured with the means of grace, but some of us still bring forth the fruits of sin. To you, sinners, God speaks in the text, and calls upon you to answer the question. If we investigate the subject, we shall find that we must say with David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." Let us then consider what God hath done for our salvation.

I. *He has made an atonement for our sins.*

By consequence of the fall we are born with sinful

natures, we are spiritually dead, and are exposed to eternal death. Yet no fault can be found with God, for Adam acted knowingly and voluntarily. But God in wisdom and love opened a way of salvation. O, matchless love! What more in an atonement could you ask than is found in this? The remedy is as great as the evil.

1. It was made for *all*. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." You see it has no limits.

2. Its effects are as extensive as the fall on all who accept its provisions. Temporal death is remedied by the resurrection. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." We are raised to spiritual life—to love God—enjoy his favour, &c. We are crowned with eternal life. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. It was made at an infinite price—even the blood of the Son of God. None other could have made it. What greater atonement could God make?

II. *He has given us a revelation.*

1. He has taught us our lost condition. No one can look around him without seeing the proof that we are sinners. Why does nature, animate and inanimate, appear our foe? Why is man the foe of his fellow? Why the war within ourselves? In the Bible he has given us the knowledge, full and clear, of our spiritual death,

and liability to eternal death. None can doubt who read.

2. He has taught us our condition under the gospel—our probationship—the possibility of salvation—the fullness and freeness of salvation—its conditions—his will respecting us. None can here plead ignorance. What more could be asked in knowledge than that it should be exactly suited to us? This is; it is as much as we need, is of the right kind, positive and plain.

III. *He has convicted us of our sin.*

All our moral powers were impaired by the fall. How much of a perfect conscience remains we know not; but we know that enough remains to condemn even a heathen. Conscience has convicted you many times of sin, and made you pale with fear. Run over your past lives and count those times. Those scenes in the dead of night, how awful! But God hath not left this work to conscience; he hath sent his Spirit to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” You have not been passed by; you have heard his reproofs in the house of God—have felt his strivings when reading the Bible—his alarms in the grave-yard, and on the bed of sickness. He has come *uncalled*. That he has not led you to Christ, is no proof that he is not sufficient. He would have done this, had you not resisted. “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” What more could be required of conviction than that it should make you realize your guilt and danger? This it has done, and it has effected all that it could consistently with your free agency. Tremble, sinner, if its realizations are growing less clear!

IV. *He has placed before us the strongest motives.*

Place before a wretch happiness, and is it not the great motive to action? We are miserable, and happiness is placed before us here; the comforts of life, the approval of conscience, the smiles of God. Look at the motives in

reference to eternity. On the one hand there is a crown—a throne—a heaven—unmingled, uninterrupted, eternal happiness. On the other, there are the gnawings of the worm that dieth not—the gnashings of teeth—the burnings of an eternal hell. They almost shatter the mightiest intellect that attempts to grasp them. God has none greater to place before the highest seraph.

V. *He has given us sufficient strength to embrace salvation.*

We are, by nature, perfectly helpless. By the atonement strength is given us to subdue our wills, and to enable us to repent, believe, and obey. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Hence God’s offers, commands, threatenings, entreaties, &c., are all based upon our ability through grace. Thousands have proved our position by their own experience. You cannot in reason wish for greater power; it would destroy your free agency.

Well may Jehovah ask, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” And yet some of you are not saved. Why? You must find the answer in yourselves. But the resources of Deity seem to be exhausted, and he will do no more. Let me then ask you,

1. Shall what he has done and is still doing for you prove effectual? You alone can say, and you must say in your life. You act under fearful responsibilities. The Spirit still flows like a mighty flood, but it may be at its height, or on its ebb! Say now, sinner! Or,

2. Will you risk the consequences? The appeal of Jehovah to the Jews was not idle talk; it was the precursor of judgments. So may this be with you the loudest call—the last! If not saved, you will be lost! “What

more could have been done to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" O! in the day of thy final condemnation, will not these words come up with power, and wilt thou not feel their force? Say, will you avert that condemnation? Do it instantly!

IX.

IF OUR GOSPEL BE HID, IT IS HID TO THEM THAT ARE LOST: IN WHOM THE GOD OF THIS WORLD HATH BLINDED THE MINDS OF THEM WHICH BELIEVE NOT, LEST THE LIGHT OF THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, SHOULD SHINE UNTO THEM.—2 Cor. iv, 3, 4.

THE gospel is beautifully represented in the text as a sun which has risen to cheer the earth with its beams. It is indeed the light of the moral world, by which we may be guided safely through its perplexing scenes to a better land. It arose in a night of darkness. Judea, once half illumined by revelation, was in its twilight. Total darkness had settled down on all other lands. Yet then the Sun of righteousness arose, preceded by one star alone, (John,) which threw its light over the wilderness of Judea, but which was soon removed from earthly gaze. And that sun now shines, not in the calmness of its morning rising, but in the full-orbed splendour of its meridian glory. It will "stand still upon Gibeon" till the contest of sin shall end, and then it will "melt away into the light of heaven."

I. *There are those to whom it is hidden.*

1. In its evidences. These were spread before the Jews in a wonderful manner in the fulfilment of prophecy, and in the display of miracles. Even if there had been no other evidence given them than the words of Christ, they might have believed. They did not believe—they

do not now. These were spread before the Gentiles in the miracles and teachings of the apostles, and in the lives and deaths of martyrs and confessors; but many believed not. Wise and good men have collected this vast amount of evidence, and have laid it before every age, but every age has teemed with infidels. In the ranks of skepticism are found all classes.

2. In its beauty. Its moral precepts are admitted to be just and pure, but many see not their beauty, which lies in their extent, utility, and benevolence. Hence they are called severe and arbitrary.

Its doctrines have ever been ridiculed by multitudes. The doctrines of depravity, atonement, regeneration, holiness, future judgment, &c., have been "foolishness" to infidelity, and have been classed with the absurd fables of heathen mythology. There is, however, beauty in them. The atonement is a wonderful display of wisdom, justice, and love. So holiness commends itself to all who rightly reflect upon it, as an indispensable requisite to individual and social happiness. And the judgment can but be considered as a desirable end of earthly things.

Its promises of pardon, assistance, and heaven, when considered in their nature, extent, and richness, render the gospel glorious to the penitent and the saint, while to the unbelieving they have no charms.

3. In its power unto salvation. To the majority of men it has none, though freely offered. It does not save them from sin and its consequences, but, by their rejection of it, enhances both. Strange infatuation of our race, that it is hidden to so many! Awful verification of the saying of Christ, "Many are called, but few are chosen!"

II. *The cause.*

The text says it is Satan, called "the god of this world," because men generally serve him. In another place he is called "the spirit that now worketh in the children of

disobedience." It is said again, "the whole world lieth in wickedness," or in "the wicked one." His power is exerted against the efforts of saints and the dictates of conscience. He "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." He does this in various ways, two of which only will be named.

1. By prejudice. We are naturally opposed to divine truth, because it thwarts our wishes, runs counter to our hopes, and strengthens our fears. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Such are the "lost" to whom the gospel is "hid"—not the finally lost, but "the lost sheep," whether of the house of Israel or of other folds. Thus were the ancient Jews and Gentiles blinded; the former because Christ did not answer their hopes; the latter because of the humility of his extraction, character, and religion. So many now will not study the gospel. They despise it. It is independent and manly to cavil!

2. By the riches, honours, and pleasures of earth. Many make wealth their chief pursuit, as if this were the object of life. We cannot induce them to stop for a moment to engage in a nobler pursuit. They are in a race, and look only at the end, and are blinded by it. We ask no stronger proof that "we are of the earth."

The honours of the world are captivating to all who have not learned of Christ to despise them. We seek them in different ways, and they appear as the supreme good. Like all distant objects, they seem larger than they are. Honour, to thousands, is the sun which outshines every thing else, and lures them on to ruin. Satan tried it with Christ. But, O the depravity of man, the glory and honour of heaven have no charms for mortals!

Pleasure is the great pursuit of men, and that too in forbidden objects. It is an idol, and every thing is sacri-

ficed at its unhallowed shrine. Blinded by it, we will not look at its emptiness, sting, and fleeting nature. How often have we refused to let "the glorious gospel" shine upon us, lest it should destroy our pleasures, interrupt our gayety, and check our mirth! And for pleasure we sell our souls! For this we purchase "*outer darkness*!"

It is no cause of wonder that the gospel is hid to the worldly. They desire not to see it, they use not the means. Unless you change your course, to you it will always be hidden. The time will come when God will reward you according to your ways!



X.

THE COMMON PEOPLE HEARD HIM GLADLY.—Mark xii, 37.

"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Such was the expression of the apostle, and such has been the experience of the church in all ages. The common people are those, principally, who have believed. Why? Not because religion was not designed for all. Not because they are more easily deluded; the wise are as often deluded, and religion requires common sense, which is equally distributed among the high and low. Why then the fact? There are many reasons. Let us adduce the principal.

I. *The difference between the two classes in regard to wealth.*

The few only are rich, and their wealth has prevented their piety; for wealth is an idol which men are more prone to worship than other objects. It tends also to

make its possessors feel proud and independent ; the luxuries which it procures remove them from many of the wants and miseries of common life, and hence they feel themselves to be above their fellows. Specially is this the case when wealth procures office, influence, and flattery, as it now does. If you doubt this, look into society for yourselves, or elevate a poor man suddenly to the pinnacle of wealth. Again, it leads men to love the world more ; having all things around them pleasant, their affections become fastened to earth, and they think less of death and eternity. Wealth makes men poor in eternity, as it keeps them from God here. "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." The common people have not wealth as an idol, whatever else they may have. They realize their dependance every day upon their fellow-men, and are in the same circumstances with the great body of them ; hence they are not so prone to pride and independence of feeling. They are rarely courted and flattered. Every thing is not in abundance around them, and the world is not so bright to them ; they are obliged to live more like "strangers and pilgrims on the earth ;" hence they go to God for happiness. Consider, moreover, that the gospel places all men on a level as spiritual beings, and requires the rich to feel as humble and dependant as the poor. It is therefore more repulsive to the former than to the latter. No wonder then at the fact.

II. *The difference in regard to their amusements.*

The common people cannot enter into the festivities of the rich, because of the expense ; and further, there is a wall between them which must not be scaled. The balls and pleasure parties of the rich lead them to an inordinate attention to appearances. The person must be dressed in the newest fashion in order to be noticed and regarded ; hence the time spent at the *toilette*. The con-

versation must be just so refined in order to be esteemed. Now the effect of these things is to make men proud and vain, to cover up the heart, and remove it from simplicity. The spirit is neglected in the care which is bestowed on the body and mind. The common people do not expect so much ostentation and refinement among themselves; hence there is not the same danger from the tempers which they tend to produce. Consider, too, that the amusements of the poor must be, on account of the cost, less frequent.

The reading of the rich and gay, especially of females, must be light, as novels, romances, &c., to prepare them, it is said, for company. Such reading produces mental dissipation, and unfits the mind for the study of the Bible and for sober reflection. The poor have neither the time nor the money to expend on these works. If we consider, too, that the gospel forbids the amusements to which we have alluded, this ostentation and vanity, and requires us to have an eye single to the glory of God, to come out from the world, and deny ourselves, we shall see more clearly still the reason of the fact.

III. *The common people are not so prone to skepticism as the wise and great.*

The wisdom of this world leads men to despise that of God. Men of learning leave too often the plain path of the gospel to theorize and speculate. Examples are abundant. The common people have not the time for this; they are governed more by plain common sense. Again, the rich and fashionable connect fashion with religion; they thus take away from the latter all its zeal and spirituality, till they make for themselves a system which requires little or no humility. The speculations of the wise unfit them for the exercise of simple faith in Christ, and the pride of the rich makes it hard to throw away self, and be saved by the righteousness of Christ. The

common people are not so much exposed to these dangers, and hence the fact.

How lamentable that the rich are thus against God; how forcible the proof that man has fallen! When viewed in the light of time, how discouraging to the minister! But in the light of eternity *all* are of equal value; the soul of the beggar as valuable as that of the prince. Let me be instrumental in saving a beggar's soul, and I will never complain.

XI.

IF ANY MAN AMONG YOU SEEMETH TO BE WISE IN THIS WORLD, LET HIM BECOME A FOOL, THAT HE MAY BE WISE.—1 Cor. iii, 18.

NEVER has there been an age since the existence of the Christian church when this language was not appropriate. Men have not stood upon the same level with regard to learning, but some have been distinguished above others. Esteemed as wise, they have been elevated to high stations in society, and, from their power over men, have moulded the fate of empires. Generally, however, they have withheld their influence from Christianity. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Why is this? And why the necessity of becoming fools in the view of earthly wisdom, if we would be wise in the sight of God? Because the wisdom of God in the redemption by Christ is foolishness with man, and the wisdom of man, in the rejection of the atonement, is foolishness with God. It is not strange that the wisdom of man should be unlike that of God in its extent and perfection, since the moral distance between God and man is so great; but it is strange that it should be opposed to his, inasmuch as we are his creatures; nor can it be accounted for, except on

the ground of our depravity; this satisfactorily explains it. Do we wish for proof that the doctrine of the atonement is folly in human estimation, and that hence the sentiment of the text is true? This proof is scattered in profusion around us. Let us collect a little.

1. *From the Jews.* To them it was "a stumbling-block." They had been taught to believe in the advent of the Messiah; the time had been fixed, his appearance described;—he came as predicted, but they rejected him. Why? Because he did not answer their ill-grounded expectations. In such a one it were folly to trust! So act the scattered tribes even now.

2. *From the Gentiles.* The most learned of them would not receive the gospel, and left it to win its way among the poor and illiterate. Why? That God had given his Son to be the Redeemer of the world—that that Son had appeared from among the Jews—under circumstances so humiliating—and had died that they might live—was to them matter of ridicule. They could not fathom the wisdom of God, and therefore derided it. But do you say this proof is collected from past ages? Let us then come down to the present time.

3. *Christianity numbers among its devoted friends many wise men at the present day, but not because it has softened its requisition.* They became "fools for Christ's sake," as did Paul. Still the majority of the wise, in their pride, reject the religion of the gospel. Some, in their wisdom, endeavour to show us that there is no need of an atonement. Hence they magnify the goodness of man, and speak of his native purity. They seem to close their eyes to the holiness of God, to the blackness of the human heart, and to the fact that men in all ages have, by offering sacrifices of blood, shown their conviction that they were sinners. Others say it is unreasonable to suppose that an innocent being could make satisfaction for sin, and call

upon us to say whether Christ suffered as much as the whole human race could suffer, and if so, how it is that there are still conditions of life? When they ask for the sake of truth, we will reply. Others contend that it would be unjust in God to give his Son to die for man, and that the Son had no right to give himself as a sacrifice; but equally would such reasoning apply to the sacrifices of human benevolence. And others still assert that the doctrine of the atonement disgraces God, and represents him as tyrannical and bloodthirsty. Indeed, human wisdom seems to have exhausted all its resources in efforts to make the doctrine of the atonement appear ridiculous. Hence the believers in this doctrine, from St. Paul down to the meanest slave, are, in the sight of earth's wise men, enthusiasts and fools. But in the sight of God they are the only really wise.

The text lays before you the work which you are to do in order to become wise. From what has been said, you see that it is a humiliating work. You must bow at the cross, and learn of Jesus. You must part with your pride, and must bear the scorn and ridicule of the world. Can you hesitate for one moment to do it? Can it be that any of you are so foolish as to prize the praise of men more than that of God? Remember, your hesitancy to comply proves it! But you are not to live here always; the day is fast approaching when the approbation of your Judge will be to you of more value than that of all the world!

XII.

THESE THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, ARE COME HITHER ALSO.—Acts xvii, 6.

THE gospel has generally been unpopular. It has been branded as enthusiasm, and its ministers as fanatics, slanderers, innovators, and revolutionists. See, for instance, how Christ and his early followers were regarded. So with reformers in every age. And now let a man plainly and zealously preach, and let success attend his labours, and he is a fanatic! Wicked men plot his ruin, and even the respectable ridicule his doctrines, and make insinuations against his character or motives in order to destroy his influence. O yes, we may be excited to madness about the affairs of time, but if we are zealous for eternity we are fools! The reason is plain; men are in league with Satan, and they fear the effects of faithful preaching on his kingdom. Let us consider,

I. *The kind of excitement which we wish to produce.*

We avow excitement to be our object, and here we claim to follow the example of Christ, (Matt. x, 34,) and to obey the dictation of the Spirit, (John xvi, 8.) Will God bless any preaching not of this kind? By nature we are, to a great degree, insensible to our relations to God as our Creator, Sovereign, Redeemer; to the duties growing out of these relations, as gratitude, love, faith; and to the consequences of obedience or disobedience. Our inclinations and pursuits increase this insensibility. Hence hope and fear are dormant. Hence many nominal Christians are practical atheists. Religion is last thought of, least cared about. Thus are we borne thoughtlessly over the rapids of Time to the ocean of Eternity.

We wish to awaken men to a sense of these relations and duties, and then they will see that they are lost sin-

ners in need of a Saviour—to a sense of the consequences of sin and holiness, and then they will see that religion is to them of infinite moment. Having thus enlightened their understanding, we would appeal to their reason, conscience, and passions, to induce them to become holy. We wish them, in fine, to hate sin, to love God with all their hearts, and to be wholly interested and unceasingly employed in doing his will. It is a holy excitement then which we would produce, such as exists in heaven. Can you doubt that such an excitement exists there? Can you doubt the happiness of heaven? Would not a similar state of society produce happiness here? I wish I could raise such an excitement. True, the thunder-storm might cause alarm; but it would purify the atmosphere.

II. *The means which we may use.*

The faithful exhibition of the gospel, accompanied by zeal, love, and prayer. These are purely moral means; can you object to them? Men must be taught, without reserve, their lost condition—the way of salvation, its freeness, fulness, and conditions—the shortness of their probation—the certainty of judgment—the realities of eternity. The motives which we are to urge are the love of Christ—the blessed effects of religion on individuals, and on society—and the unspeakable joys of heaven. These we cannot exaggerate. But what if these fail? Shall we fold our arms? Would this be innocent? Not so long as there is a Bible. We must declare the consequences of sin—the terrors of death, judgment, and hell. Away with false delicacy in declaring these consequences. We cannot paint them in colours too awful. Strange that you should be unwilling to hear of them, but willing to risk them! But, you say, this course will frighten the timid, and harden the bold. We are not responsible for such a result, but are responsible for the character of our preaching. It is a mistaken idea

that religion makes men insane. It is sin that does this. Thoughts of judgment are glorious to the saint, but awful to the sinner. Why awful? Because the sinner feels convicted and guilty. Sin then causes all this misery; *it is the monster which we would destroy*. This must be done with zeal; no matter how earnest and frequent our appeals and our meetings; he will not neglect his family who is imbued with religion. Sinners must see that we are in earnest, or they will not be. Love to God and man must show itself in all our efforts. Prayer unceasing must be made *for the aid of the Spirit*. We *depend* on this aid; *we would have no revival which the Spirit does not cause and pervade*. These means God prescribes and blesses.

III. *The design which we have in view.*

It is not to make ourselves famous in the church or in the world, not to create a party, but to save souls, and glorify God. We would excite Christians that they may be active, and sinners that they may escape hell. Were your houses on fire over your heads by night, you would not think us enthusiasts, were we never so earnest to alarm you; why think so now? Were the revolutionary fathers fanatics? What zeal did they manifest? What zeal should we show in our nobler cause!

Christians, God has brought us here to turn the world upside down. It needs it. Its principles, actions, and spirit, are all wrong. The gospel which has been placed in our hands is the great lever which will overturn the world. It has been applied for ages; apostles and saints of later times have laid hold on it, and our world has trembled; its idol altars and pagan temples have tottered and fallen. Lay hold with a firm grasp, nor relax nor tire, till "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

XIII.

I COULD WISH THAT MYSELF WERE ACCURSED FROM CHRIST, FOR MY BRETHREN, MY KINSMEN, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH.—Rom. ix, 3.

THE apostle had just appealed, in the most solemn manner, to his own "conscience, bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost," and to the great Searcher of hearts, that "he spake the truth in Christ," when he assured them that "he had great heaviness, and continual sorrow in his heart." And well might he be both solemn and sorrowful, for he foresaw, and was about to state, the awful fact, that the Jews would reject the gospel. He knew the fatal consequences of that rejection. He saw the gathering storm of Jehovah's wrath, (so clearly predicted by Christ,) which, in its fury, would sweep away their temple, city, and nation, and scatter them in exile among Gentile realms—he foresaw their temporal and eternal destruction. Himself a Jew, his affectionate heart prompted him to wish "that himself were accursed from Christ," &c. Do not, however, misunderstand him, nor deduce from his words that revolting doctrine, that he was willing to suffer the loss of his own soul for the sake of the salvation of his brethren. He would be unhappy, not unholy, for their good, and suffer at Christ's hands any temporal evil to rescue them from their impending doom. *So deeply should we feel, and so cheerfully should we be willing to suffer temporal evils for the salvation of sinners.* This doctrine, however, may appear visionary to the cold-hearted professor, and infidelity may rise up to question its consistency with reason. Let us, then, briefly vindicate it against all such charges.

I. *All human actions which have been truly glorious in themselves and in their effects, have proceeded from this principle of self-sacrifice.*

The careful observer of history will readily admit it. He sees that this spirit has reigned in the breasts of all whose memory he reveres, and whose deeds have been beneficial to man. All improvements that have been made in man's condition have had their rise here.

It is the essence of patriotism ; to sacrifice all, and part with one's life for his country, is patriotism ; nothing short of this deserves the name. Leonidas, Regulus, Hancock, Washington—how glorious their deeds—how blessed their memory ! And what spirit prompted them ?

It is the fountain of philanthropy ; to suffer privations and hardships for others, is philanthropy. While memory lives, it will linger around the names of Howard, Clarkson, and Wilberforce.

It is the spirit of the missionary cause. Is it not clearly seen in the life of him who leaves all to civilize and Christianize heathen lands ? And is there not a moral grandeur investing this cause, which commands the attention of the world ? O, how glorious the object it proposes ! how numerous the self-denials it requires ! Even angels admire and wonder !

II. *It is involved in the golden rule.*

“ All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” Say not that obedience to this rule requires it not. Christian, you ask it of your brother in your pilgrimage. You know you owe it to your impenitent friend ; for were you in his place with your feelings, you would ask it of him. “ All things whatsoever,” &c. And if the soul be more valuable than the body, and eternity than time, you are not loving him better than yourself by submitting to temporal evils for his salvation. And what rule can be wiser and more benevolent ? What would make earth happier ? O, it would do away selfishness, and make this wide world a family of brothers, a second Eden ! As human beings now are,

obedience to this rule involves the exercise of the principle which we are now vindicating.

III. *It was the guiding principle of the Saviour.*

You plead earthly precedents, but Paul can refer you to the King of heaven. Moses saying, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book," (Exod. xxxii, 32,) was high authority, but Christ is the highest known in earth and heaven. I hear Paul pleading this exalted rule: Phil. ii, 5-12. I might go over the Saviour's history, and bid you see in every line the proof; but I can refer to two circumstances only: Luke xix, 41; Matt. xxiii, 37. How could he have gathered them but by his bleeding hands upon a cursed cross? His cruel death! And O! it was for you! Isaiah liii. Was not his first step to leave heaven, and all its honour, and happiness, and glory? Did he not come to bear your sins, and avert your doom? Did he not assume your sufferings? Was he not accursed of men, and smitten and left of God? O! let his word declare. He came to suffer, to die for your salvation. It was an infinite sacrifice, such as all created beings could never make. And now, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

Have I not proved the doctrine to be consistent with reason and revelation? But have I inspired the feeling? This was my main object. How many can adopt the language of the text? O, there is a lamentable lack of feeling among us. The drunkard, the debauchee, the sinner may say, "No man careth for my soul." We need this feeling to rouse us to effort; this effort to see the salvation of sinners. Will you cultivate the feeling, and make the effort? Reflect on the little worth of every thing except souls—souls exposed to hell, but made for heaven. Reflect on what thy Saviour did for thee. Is it not a privilege to imitate him? God help you so to do.

XIV.

WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY.—Col. iii, 4.

THE saint's hope of a blessed immortality is based on a surer foundation than all earthly hopes. It is not founded on any inferences drawn from his present existence, or from the capacity of the soul, but on the promise and history of the Captain of our salvation. He who is our life—the fountain from which we derive every thing that gives animation and vigour to our souls—whose connection with us is so intimate that he is our head—so necessary, that were it dissolved our spirits would be as lifeless as our corpses—he has given us his promise, “Because I live, ye shall live also,”—a promise based on this very union. And to quiet all our fears, he has spread before us his own history from the manger to heaven. In all this he has shown you human nature leaning on the divine, pursuing its wondrous journey to immortality. In your likeness he stands before the throne, presenting the proof and the pledge of your own blessed immortality. This shall one day be made manifest to us all; for “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

I. *The Christian, in this world, is in a state of humiliation.*

There is nothing in his present appearance which indicates the saint as an heir of glory. There is in this respect an analogy between him and Christ. He bore no sign of his Godhead, no marks of royalty. The world knew him not. This humiliation results from several causes inseparable from our present state of existence, some of which I will now mention.

1. His union with a frail, corruptible body. Human glory is greater or less from its connection with external

forms, &c.—as a king and a beggar; Christ on the mount of transfiguration, and on the cross. Now it is our irreversible doom to carry with us a dying body! What changes sin has wrought in the body we cannot fully tell; but it has impaired its beauty and strength, and made it dying. From the cradle to the grave it is the waning form of departed glory, bearing on its front the marks of God's anger. We may not perceive the humiliation, but Heaven must. You would see it in a criminal chained to a corpse. In something of this light angels see us!

2. The nature of the life he here leads. The employments of men add more or less to human glory. They are to a great extent earthly, not heavenly; sensual, not spiritual. The very terms of our present existence are, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Much time must be spent in providing for these bodies. Intellectual pursuits are engaged in chiefly to facilitate the making of this provision. All spiritual pursuits are but preparatory duties; they are attended with toil, self-denial, &c. Such is the condition of human life. The saint is here a pilgrim, far from home; a labourer covered with sweat and dust—a soldier in arms and wounds—nor will he be victorious over all his foes till his day shall have past, his sun gone down.

3. The place of his abode. A change has come over this earth; it is not Eden now—it is cursed, and it bears the marks of it: sterile plains, wasting storms, &c. It bears the marks of judgments also: the flood, &c. It is *the footstool* of God. It is filled with sin, covered with darkness. No wonder that here you should be like the sun seen through the fog—shorn of your glory!*

* "As when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams." *Paradise Lost.*

II. *At the appearance of Christ he will be exalted to glory.*

“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.” “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” Yes, Christ shall appear at the last day, “in the clouds with power and great glory,” to own his friends, and conduct them to heaven. The world on fire will be the signal to the universe of their triumphal entrance—angels their escort—the harps of heaven their welcome. Splendid have been the processions of kings, but this will outvie all earthly pageants. Immortal honour will be attached to those that compose it.

No human being can fully tell in what this glory will consist. The Bible has laid down the principles, but who can enlarge? What imagination will not fail? Who that has thought most—seen most—will not say, “What I know is finite, what I do not know is infinite?” I am reluctant to particularize, lest I should take from the beauty and grandeur of the subject. I would rather dwell on those general ideas, given in the Bible, which overwhelm by their vastness; but they make not the vivid impression which results from minutiae. Consider then,

1. That the saint will be freed from all the imperfections of his present state of existence. Sin has affected both body and soul; but this cause will cease to act upon him after death. At the resurrection, his body will be made incorruptible and glorious, worthy of the soul, of heaven, of God. His mind will be unfettered, undarkened, capacious as eternity—every way fitted for its delights and employments.

2. The place of his abode. Many times does the Bible tell us it is heaven. However vague our notions of it, this we know—it has felt no curse, knows no suffering. Earth’s most glowing imagery is used in the Bible in

merely sketching it; who then shall paint it? It is the home of angels—the throne of God!

3. His companions. To pass over the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; angels are his companions, the cherub and seraph his familiar friends. Above all, he has fellowship with the Son, and communion with the source of wisdom, the ever-blessed God!

4. His outward marks of honour. The Bible glances at many. The fairest insignia of earthly glory are referred to as shadowy emblems of them. "Heirs," "jewels," "sons," "kings," "priests," will there be no empty titles. The honours belonging to them will be inseparable from their possession. "Robes," "harps," "crowns," "thrones," are the insignia of saints. They are all-enduring! All of happiness and glory which heaven knows will be ours. Shall we recognise ourselves when clothed with such an "*exceeding, eternal weight of glory?*"

Is this glory prepared for us all? Who are now its heirs? Who will refuse to seek it? Who will regard toil to obtain it? Come now and join this victorious army, and when the last battle shall have been fought, you shall, in the triumphal procession, enter the everlasting gates, and be rewarded by the King of glory.

XV.

CAST NOT AWAY THEREFORE YOUR CONFIDENCE, WHICH HATH GREAT RECOMPENSE OF REWARD.—Heb. x, 35.

A BELIEVER'S confidence has respect merely to present and eternal salvation. The ground of it is the atonement of Christ. By nature he is destitute of all good, of all excuse for his sins, of all claim to heaven; and is an heir

of hell. Christ died for his sins, purchased for him grace and strength, will release him from the curse of the law, and make him an heir of glory. God appropriates to the believer these blessings on condition of his faith. To rely on anything else is presumption. *Christ died for me*, is the only source of my joy—the only ground of my confidence. Our text teaches that Christians are liable to cast away their confidence, and hence the exhortation. Let us then consider,

I. *When Christians are prone to cast away their confidence in God.*

1. When they compare themselves with other Christians. We are too apt to measure ourselves by ourselves and others, rather than by the Bible. We see so great a difference between our experience and that of others, and especially that of eminent saints, that we conclude we have not been converted. Thus, instead of being provoked by them to love and good works, we despond and despair.

2. When in a low state of religious enjoyment. In such a state, which is always the consequence of unfaithfulness, our feelings are so unlike what they once were, that we feel as if we had lost all our religion. We take so little comfort in holy things that we conclude we do not love them, or their Author. This state of mind should create anxiety, but not distrust; our only help is in Christ.

3. When under great trials. In such situations we are often placed by the permission of God. We may be afflicted by the loss of property and reputation; in our persons by disease, in our families by sickness and death. In these situations we are too often absorbed in the suffering, and forget God. Hence we lose sight of his mercy and love, and feel to murmur that he has forgotten us. If he loved us, we say, he would not thus have smitten

— us. We give up our confidence in his providence and grace, instead of remembering the design and utility of afflictions.

4. In times of temptation. Innumerable are the ways in which Christians are tempted. God permits earth and hell to assail them, and has merciful designs therein. But instead of counting it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, (James i, 2,) we often despair.—“No one was ever tempted as I am.” “I cannot be a Christian, or I should not be so tempted.” “I cannot hold out, cannot resist.” How many thus speak and act!

5. When overcome by sin. Our temptations are some times so strong that we yield—the attack so bold that we surrender. We have at such times cause for grief and humility, not for despair. If we have injured the cause of Christ, let us not injure it more by renouncing it. But some give up all, forgetting that “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”—that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”—and forgetting all the promises.

II. *Let us enforce the exhortation of the apostle, “Cast not away,” &c.*

We should regard the effects of confidence,

1. Upon others. Would you make your fellow Christians bold and strong, be confident yourself. They are looking to you for an example. The fearful saint is to the world also a poor sample of the influence of religion. They know the character and promises of God, and the feelings which these should create in us. How low do both we and our religion sink in their view, when we are afraid to trust in God. The confidence of Christians, in times of danger, has led many to admire true religion; the confidence of martyrs has dismayed their enemies, and emboldened their friends. Would you show to your

children, friends, and the world, the worth of religion, be confident in God.

2. Upon ourselves. Confidence in God is our only safeguard in temptation; trust in any other being will ruin us. He only can succour, defend, and deliver us. Why not, then, trust in him? It is our only support under trials and afflictions. If our property has gone, we may be happy if we trust in Providence, and look to heaven, our enduring substance. If friends have been taken away, we may be happy if resigned to the will of our heavenly Father. If health has left us, we may be joyful in the thought of our speedy release from earth. Confidence in God will support us in the hour of death. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," is its exulting language. No terror reigns there.

It will render us calm and peaceful under all circumstances, and in all situations. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Hence the Bible often represents those as blessed who trust in the Lord. Psalms xxxiv, xxxvii, cxxv. Hence also the exhortation in the text.

3. Confidence in God will secure our eternal felicity. If we cast it away, we cast away our all. There is no other way of salvation, no other condition than reliance. If we adhere to it, we are of Christ's family, (Heb. iii, 6,) and heirs to all the glories of heaven. How vast the reward in so doing! Weigh all glory, and you will just compute it! How vast and powerful the motive to obey the divine exhortation! God help us so to do!

XVI.

WO TO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE SON OF MAN IS BETRAYED ! GOOD WERE IT FOR THAT MAN IF HE HAD NEVER BEEN BORN.—Mark xiv, 21.

THERE is something very melancholy in the circumstances of the Saviour's death. When we think of his life of humiliation and suffering, when we reflect that all his love was disinterested, and that he should die in such a way, we cannot but be affected. And when we consider that the traitor had been an intimate of the Saviour, that he had witnessed his conversation and acts of benevolence, that he betrayed him for so small a sum, and in such a manner, there is a feeling of abhorrence which rises in our bosoms. But let us not vent all our indignation upon Judas ; thousands since have betrayed Christ, yea, crucified him. Heb. vi, 6. We may do it, if we have not already, though he is not now incarnate. We may, to all intents, sell him for money, and deliver him to his foes. Let us consider then the different ways in which we are in danger of betraying Christ.

I. *By avarice, or for the sake of wealth.*

Thus Judas did. Those professors of religion, who are more eager to attain wealth than piety, are guilty. Why ? They profess to have the spirit of Christ, and say by their profession that he approves their course ; they thus bring contempt upon the church, and what is done to the church is done to Him. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." They who deviate from the rule of right for the sake of a good bargain, however small the deviation, are guilty. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called

the least in the kingdom of heaven." They do teach men so by their example ; they sell the principles of the gospel for money, and give the name of Christian to the contempt of the world. Fear then the first step ; Judas began by stealing. John xii, 6.

II. *By ambition.*

The honours of the world are captivating to all, but Christ commands us not to love them. Yet how many professed Christians covet them, and exert themselves to obtain them ! Times of political excitement afford many examples ; witness their connivances—their attendance in caucuses on sabbath evenings, &c.

How many others sacrifice active good for literary distinction ! Do not such betray Christ ? Let the world answer. He who preaches for popularity is verily guilty of betraying Christ ; he sacrifices the glory of God for worldly honour. Lord, save me !

III. *By self-indulgence.*

To engage in the sinful amusements of the world is to betray Christ. How much reproach has thus been brought upon the church ! The indulgence of impure thoughts and desires has led very many to unholy actions—*traitorous* actions. The indulgence of revenge and pride has given rise to acts which have shown that the heart was against Christ, and that the individual needed but the opportunity to become an actual traitor. What a man *would do*, for that must he answer ! What *would* many do, in despite of the precepts of Christ, were circumstances favourable ! How many have *in deeds* imbodyed lust, revenge, and pride, and thus sold Christ to his enemies ! But the indulgence of self-will has, perhaps, been the most fruitful cause of betraying Christ. What a spirit of rebellion is thus fostered ! and this spirit, be it remembered, would, were it not subdued, lead to treason. What difficulties have arisen in churches from this source ! How many

have thus betrayed Christ, so that the church from necessity has expelled them ! The indulgence of self-love has also led multitudes to betray Christ ; all who live for themselves alone are sure to do it.

IV. *By carelessness.*

A man, especially if placed in an elevated station, may betray his country by carelessness in time of peace, or by disclosing secrets in time of war. So Christians may betray Christ through want of consideration and reflection. They are bound to watch and pray constantly, and may obtain strength to do so ; and if they love their Master as they should, they will consult his will.

In conclusion ; Christ found his worst foe among the twelve disciples. Are not his worst foes now too often numbered among his friends ? Are any of us guilty of betraying him ? Let us repent, and for the future prove our fidelity by our acts. Is there a backslider here ? I entreat you to repent. Unless you do, the fruitless sorrow and awful doom of Judas may be yours ! *“Wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! good were it for that man if he had never been born.”*

XVII.

SPORTING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR OWN DECEIVINGS.—2 Peter ii, 13.

It is painful to behold the deception which is practised in the world, and the misery which it causes. Witness the tricks of business, and the poverty which follows. It is more painful to behold it where character and happiness are involved ; as in the abuse of confidence reposed in false friends. Specially painful is it to witness it in sickness ;—see the victim of consumption sporting himself with the hope of recovery. Most of all is it painful to see deception in matters of religion ; where the soul is

at stake. Here the risk is greatest, and here too the most are sporting. O how painful to the Christian! Let us enumerate some instances of those who may be said to sport themselves with their own deceivings.

1. *The infidel.* He has concluded to disbelieve the Bible altogether. He has come to this conclusion either independently, or by the aid of others. In either case he has been willingly deceived, for he has relied on unassisted and perverted reason, or has been warped by prejudice or inclination. No prayer, no humble reliance on divine aid, has mingled with any efforts which he may have made to learn the truth, while conscience and the Spirit are against him. Resting in infidelity, he lives without at all recognising God—lives for his own pleasure—without reference to eternity—and even ridiculing every thing like piety. If the Bible be true, is he not deceiving himself? Is he not fearfully sporting while the sword of justice hangs over him?

2. *The hypocrite.* He deceives men, accomplishes his purposes under the guise of religion, and inwardly laughs at his success. He hopes never to be detected, yet how often he is detected! How often on his death-bed! "His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle; and shall bring him to the king of terrors." But he is the most deceived himself, for he acts on the principle that to appear religious here is the main thing. The Bible says otherwise. Perhaps he expects to deceive God; he acts as if this were his expectation, but his hope shall be cut off. What sorry sporting will this appear to be at the bar of God!

3. *The man of pleasure.* He acts on the principle that this world can afford lasting joys; but the Bible and experience say that it cannot. Hence he tries new plans, and sports with the light that leads him through the bogs of pain and sorrow. He also acts on the principle that the

chief end of life is to enjoy pleasure here. This is his great deception. Hence he makes no preparation for eternity, and laughs at those who do. Poor man! his day will soon be over—the eternal night will soon overshadow him!

“O ye who deem one moment unamused
A misery, say, dreamers of gay dreams!
How will you weather *an eternal night*?”

4. *The moralist.* His theory is that his heart need not be changed, that his own works can commend him to God. This is a deception, as will appear evident, if we consider what we are, what God is, and what are the requisitions of the gospel. He sports with his deception, for he permits it to lead him to security and ease, though he is without repentance and faith. How painful to see him going in spiritual death to death eternal, and yet sporting along the way!

5. *The procrastinator.* He puts off attention to the great subject of religion on many pretences.

“Waiting God’s time.” He has an idea that God will convert him by irresistible power! Waiting for this, and yet living in sin! But *now* is God’s time, and every moment is carrying him beyond it. Wait for irresistible power! He must wait for ever!

“Waiting for a more convenient season.” His business now interferes, and when will it not? His plans are now in the way, and so they always will be. There can be no more convenient season than the present, whether he consider the state of his own heart, or the disposition of God. Every moment’s delay makes the matter worse. And yet how many go on sporting, and in their sporting die! O death-beds, what say ye to this!

Let us remember, 1. What will render this deception so painful to us hereafter is, that it is *our own work*. We have reason, conscience, the Bible, and the Spirit. We are free to avail ourselves of their aid, or to refuse.

Satan cannot deceive us without our consent. What more aggravating thought than this, when our eyes shall be opened?

2. The deception will end with this world, but its awful consequences will not. Many shall open their eyes in death, and see their folly and their doom. All in the spirit-world shall see clearly. The deceiver will there laugh at us, and torment us for our folly. O sport not with your own deceivings, for eternal happiness is at stake!

XVIII.

SIN EXCEEDING SINFUL.—Rom. vii, 13.

THE great design of preaching is to save men from eternal death. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." But this salvation can be attained only by an entire renovation of our nature. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The reason is, we are sinners, and God is holy, and hates sin. Hence the necessity of showing men what sin is, in its nature and consequences, that it may seem to them "exceeding sinful," and that they may be induced to go to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and be saved for ever. Let us show that sin is in its nature, aside from its consequences, an exceedingly great evil. This will appear evident if we consider,

I. *The mercy which it rejects.*

Man's fall gave rise to the necessity of an atonement. It was mercy, and not justice, which prompted God to make it. The blessings which the atonement secures to all men, and especially to those that believe, exhibit the

boundless mercy of God. This mercy the sinner rejects—rejects while he knows that he cannot be saved by justice—rejects after it has been offered ten thousand times, and with love—rejects while spiritual death preys upon him, and while eternal death is before him. Is not this great pride—great slighting of a holy God? Is it not suicide? This mercy is free and infinite, and we are in need of it, and this is what renders us so odious in the rejection of it.

II. *The power which it despises.*

How odious is that man who despises the power of a good ruler; what a destitution of sense and wisdom does he exhibit! How great the crime to condemn a judge when acting uprightly! Now God is king over all, not by a delegated, but by an inherent right; so is he “the judge of all the earth.” He cannot but do right, and in his arm is almighty power. The sinner despises his power, and refuses to respect him as a lawgiver, governor, and judge. Every act of sin is a despising of the power which forbids it. Yea, sinners challenge God to exert his power; as profane swearers, for example. They no more respect his power than if he had none, and act as if he had none. And his power is exerted only for *the happiness of the universe*. There must be, then, something awfully wicked in the sin which despises it.

III. *The ingratitude which it manifests.*

Ingratitude, even to men, is one of the most odious traits of character. The greater the goodness bestowed, the greater the ingratitude. Now God is our Father, and every blessing which we receive comes from him. He is our Redeemer, and O the infinite love which that redemption manifests! For all these favours the sinner feels no gratitude. He is thoughtless, even in the most favourable view which we can take; he murmurs, and is discontented. That love which God displays in his redemption

he will not accept nor reciprocate, but turns his back upon it. Yea, he reviles his Saviour, and stabs him to the heart. For proof, see how the Saviour was treated when on earth. Thus is he treated now ; for ye are at enmity against him. Sin has lost none of its peculiarities. O hellish ingratitude ! O frightful sin ! what is thy nature ?

IV. *Sin is "exceeding sinful," for it is rebellion against God.*

It is very difficult to decide when men have a right to rebel against "the powers that be." But all admit that we have no right to rebel against a good government. How exceedingly wicked, then, must be rebellion against God ; for he has,

1. A perfect right to our obedience, as our Creator and Preserver. We are owned by him. This world is his ; subject to his power, governed by his laws.

2. His government is wise and just. None can fathom the wisdom exhibited in his natural, intellectual, and moral laws ; nor his justice, displayed in all his works and ways ; they are infinite.

3. His government would secure the greatest possible amount of happiness to every man. This follows from his infinite benevolence. Men have found it so in proportion to their obedience ; as in the blessings of society.

4. He is holy. By consequence, he hates sin. The sinner knows this, but he willingly offends this holiness. Sin must be "exceeding sinful," because holiness abhors it. Every act of sin is rebellion. How far is rebellion carried, notwithstanding the restraints of God's grace ! What would sin do were these restraints removed ! It would destroy all that is dear, all moral right, and even dethrone the Deity ! Proof is found in the crucifixion of Christ.

We see from this subject,

1. *Why one sin justly exposes us to the wrath of God.* One sin combines all this rejection of the mercy and contempt of the power of God; all this ingratitude and rebellion. And it is against him who hath done so much for us!

2. *The necessity of regeneration.* God is holy, and we are sinful; and can we hope to partake of his happiness without partaking of his nature? His nature is far different from ours. "*Ye must be born again.*"

XIX.

SIN EXCEEDING SINFUL.—Rom. vii, 13.

SUCH is human nature, that in order to induce men to break off their sins, it is necessary to show them not only what sin is in its nature, but also what it is in its consequences. Little do sinners think of the nature of their acts if they are not followed by evil consequences. So deep is the sleep into which we are fallen, that nothing but an appeal to our feelings can wake us. Let us endeavour to show that sin, in its consequences, is an exceedingly great evil. This will appear evident if we consider,

I. *The happiness which it rejects.*

Had man remained in a state of innocence he would have been perfectly happy as a physical, intellectual, moral, and social being. But sin closed the fountains of happiness, and opened those of misery. The gospel comes to open the former, and eternally close the latter. If all men would act according to it, they would *here* secure happiness almost as great as that which was lost, and be perfectly happy hereafter. But sin destroys the happiness of man,

1. As a physical being. It leads him to those courses which impair all his physical powers ; it induces disease, pain, and death. He does not, as he might, merely *wear out*. "The years of the wicked shall be shortened."

2. As an intellectual being. The mind is affected by the body ; its power is not half as great as it might be, and of course cannot, in its exercise, result in so much happiness. Intellectual pursuits are also attended with pain.

3. As a moral being. He loses an approving conscience, a blessed hope, and satisfied desires. He loses all that happiness which the most holy Christian enjoys.

4. As a social being. If the gospel were obeyed universally there would be no oppression, wars, or other national evils. How rapidly would men then make progress in those arts and sciences which would increase the blessings of life ! We lose by sin all these advantages, as well as all the delight which would result from a perfect state of brotherhood.

5. As an immortal being. The gospel proposes to raise us, not to an earthly, but to a heavenly paradise ; to all the happiness of angels. How useless to attempt a description of the joys of heaven ! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." They are infinite and eternal. But sin prevents our yielding to the gospel, and leads us to reject all this happiness. Is it not, then, "exceeding sinful ?"

II. *The misery which it brings upon us.*

And here where shall we begin the sad recital ?

1. As physical beings. Our diseases and pains are the result of sin, actual or original. How great the bodily pain of the drunkard and debauchee ! See how disease is transmitted !

2. As intellectual beings. Sin has rendered the intel-

lect like an encaged bird. How often is it impaired so as to lose its powers! as in cases of insanity.

3. As moral beings. How much we suffer from the fear of punishment, from remorse, and unsatisfied desire! On death-beds we see the misery of ages condensed into moments, and the elements of eternal wo inflaming human breasts!

4. As social beings. How much we suffer from the unkindness and selfishness of our fellow-men! How much from fraud, cruelty, and oppression! How much from war, volumes cannot tell. All is the effect of sin. There is not one evil, great or small, which is not the fruit of sin. Sin hath made our world a "vale of tears," a "field of blood," a "place of skulls." There is no remedy but the gospel, and this sin despises.

5. As immortal beings. Sin does not end with this world. Here it only mingles the cup, and puts it to our lips; in the other world we shall drink of it for ever. Fear, remorse, and pain only begin their work here; there they will be quickened into eternal labour. Memory, reason, and imagination will there unite to carry on the work. The justice of God will there aggravate the sinner's case. Will there not then be individual misery there as the fruit of sin? There will be also social misery. From such a state of society as will there exist, could you expect any thing else? There mutual hatred and malice will be implacable, and the means of showing them augmented. O what contentions there! In addition to all this, there will be the wrath of God on each and all, and that for ever. O what misery! Sin has made all the ingredients, and mixed them; is it not then "exceeding sinful?" But ah! I may have given you no conception of eternal death. May you never taste it!

We see from this subject,

1. *Why sin is so hateful to God.* It is so not only be-

cause it is an offence against him, but also because it makes his creatures miserable. Infinitely benevolent as he is, he desires the happiness of his creatures, and must therefore hate that which fills men with wo, the world with death, and hell with lost sinners.

2. *How great the danger of continuing therein.* You, my impenitent hearers, are those who are rejecting this happiness, and gathering this misery. O stop! turn to Christ, the Lamb of God, and you may be saved. Refuse, and you must be lost!

XX.

IT IS A LITTLE ONE.—Gen. xix, 20.

SUCH was the language of Lot as he left Sodom, and beheld Zoar. On account of its smallness, the latter was not, it would seem, in his view, so much corrupted. As ministers, we urge men to flee from sin as from a great evil. But many reply that sin is but a trifle. Others say so by their actions. Interfere with their rights, and it is a crime; interfere with God's, and it is a small matter! But sin is not a trifle, which will appear evident from several considerations.

I. *It is the cause of human degradation.*

That man is degraded none can deny who look upon society, its follies, pleasures, and vices. Whatever noble qualities we see are but broken pillars of a once beautiful fabric. From them we may infer man's original dignity. The Bible asserts that man is degraded—that his desires are sensualized—that his affections are vitiated by sin, and estranged from wisdom and holiness. Nor is this so in individual cases only; it is universal. Newly discovered nations are found to be degraded. The Bible asserts sin to be the cause. Is it a trifle, if it have such a cor-

rupting influence? Must not the fountain be large from which so many streams have issued?

II. *It is the cause of the Christian's warfare.*

His whole life is one of warfare. Thus it is always represented in the Bible. The patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, proved it so. It has been meliorated so far as it regards persecution, but the Christian must always fight. None can go smoothly to heaven. The flesh, the world, and the devil, are arrayed against him. They wage constant warfare against him, and there can be no truce, no release till death. What hath made all these his enemies? What saith the Bible? Sin! Is that a small thing which has caused the martyrdom of so many saints? which makes the Christian's conflict so hard that he needs divine assistance in order to overcome? which has so many champions, and so direful armour?

III. *God hath manifested his disapprobation of it.*

By necessity, infinite holiness must hate sin; if it be a small thing, the disapprobation would be correspondingly small. Does God manifest but little displeasure?

1. In his word he says, "O, do not this abominable thing that I hate." "The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord." What is the whole tenor of the Bible? Against sin. Why did God give it? To lead men from sin. Why has he affixed such penalties to sin? Why is he angry with sinners every day? Why does he threaten such wrath to come? Not because sin is a trifle!

2. In his works he exhibits the same strong disapprobation. He "spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell." He drove Adam and Eve from Eden—destroyed the world with a flood—Sodom with fire and brimstone—and visited the Jews with awful judgments. Why all this? Can sin be a trifle? God would not thus act for trifles! Sin is the same now; it has not changed

its nature. That it is no trifle is echoed in the sighs and groans of earth, and written in blood upon its hills and plains ;—that it is no trifle God has written in burning characters in a blazing world ;—that it is no trifle he has fearfully depicted in the curling smoke which “ascendeth up for ever and ever !”

IV. *It occasioned the sufferings and death of Christ.*

Had not sin entered our world, there would have been no need of an atonement. As sin entered, there was need. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” The law could not be annulled, man could not obey it after the fall, nor atone for past transgression. Christ became an offering for sin : (Isaiah liii :) “For he hath made him to be sin (a sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin.” Would God have given his Son to remedy a small disorder ? The greatness of the remedy shows the magnitude of the evil. Would the Son have humbled himself, suffered and died for a slight cause ? Could a trifling evil have caused such acute suffering in the garden—on the cross ? Would all the means of grace which have grown out of the atonement be used for a small purpose ? Think not that all this expense is for naught. Thy God is not foolish in his schemes, nor prodigal of means. The sufferings of Christ were proportionate to the magnitude of sin !

God then says that sin is no trifle. You cannot convince him otherwise. Remember he is Judge, and will award the penalty. *Sport not then with thine own deceivings.* Such sporting will cost thee thy soul ! And “what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?”

XXI.

HE THAT IS UNJUST, LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL.—Rev. xxii, 11.

THE revelator has just related, in graphic language, his vision of the judgment and heaven. The angel said unto him, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : *for the time is at hand.*" This may be said with propriety, since a thousand years in God's sight are as one day. The idea seems to me to be, that the effects of men's actions will soon overtake them, and prevent all change of character. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." I shall therefore endeavour to show, that *he who dies unjust will remain unjust for ever.*

Let us examine two of the objections which have been urged against our position.

1. The view of the happiness of the righteous, it is said, may change the character of the wicked in eternity.

Men see this happiness in the present life, in the words of the righteous, in their lives, whether prosperous or adverse, and in their death. The last always affects men deeply. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his !" This happiness is, in its nature, the same on earth as in heaven, as its only source is the same—the favour, love, and service of God. But it never changes the heart, unless the Spirit use it as a means. It is not in the power of circumstances to effect this change in time ; how then in eternity, since man will be the same, and the Spirit be withdrawn ?

Men say that they do not see much of this happiness in this world, owing to the nature of society, the mixed dispensations of the present life, and the numerous instances of unhappy professors of religion. Can you prove that you will see more of it in the other world ? You will be removed from it all. Dives saw it only at a distance.

But you see enough in this life to convince your understandings, and affect your sensibilities; and, as free agents, this is all you can expect. You do not comprehend how happiness can flow from the favour, love, and service of God. Why? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But the same cause will operate in eternity more powerfully to produce the same effect.

The fruition of heaven and of Eden failed to preserve angels and Adam in innocence; how idle to think the mere view of heaven may restore lost souls to obedience! If it could have done so, would God have given his Son? Would it not have been cheaper even to open all heaven to view, than to send from it his Son? He gave his Son because nothing else would do!

2. Suffering, it is said, may produce this change.

It has been asserted that all suffering is designed by God to reform the individual on whom it falls. You do not always expect this effect from punishment in civil society; pain is not always corrective to society. The pains of infants are not, from the nature of the case, corrective to the sufferers. The sufferings of Adam, which were inflicted by divine justice, and which constituted the curse of the law he had broken, were not corrective; for had they been, whence the need of a Saviour? There is, then, no certainty that the sufferings of the lost will produce a change of character.

We are daily called to much suffering in consequence of sin—as uneasiness, remorse, fear, &c.; but it does not lead us to break off our sins! How often are we visited with severe afflictions—loss of property, health, friends! We may feel deeply, as many do, but our characters remain the same. Many even grow worse—none better, unless led by the Spirit to some view of themselves. The cul-

pirit is never reformed by suffering alone. There is suffering enough to change us all, could suffering do it.

If it do not in time, why will it in eternity, man remaining the same? Because it will be greater in degree? Then present suffering would always make us proportionally better in this life. Why did not God flood the world with wo rather than give his Son, if suffering be remedial? Because suffering must be sanctified by the Spirit in order to do good, and the Spirit could be given only through the atonement. But in eternity there is no Spirit thus to act; He is sent to "*the world*," not to hell. But,

3. *Vice is progressive*; hence the truth of our position.

The law of the physical, intellectual, and moral world, is progression. This you admit. You have every reason to believe that this is the law of all God's moral universe, pervading heaven and hell. Death cannot interfere with this moral progression; it is not a suspension of being, but an opening to a boundless arena. In this world repentance alone stops the current, and faith alone turns it. Neither can exist without the aid of the Spirit, which enters not the world of wo. Weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, are not repentance; a view of the Judge is not faith in the Saviour. O, how sin will corrode for ever! How swiftly will the current flow when the opposing zephyrs of the Spirit are hushed for ever! I see the stream gushing anew from the grave, and I know its bed is eternity!

I leave this awful subject and all its associations with you, knowing that we are soon to pass from this changing scene to an unchanging and eternal world. If I had come commissioned to apply the declaration of the text to you *now*, how would you feel? We are liable to be removed at any and every moment! O! let us ascertain our moral character, for this alone of all things shall we carry with us. If holy, let us persevere; if unholy, repent and believe.

XXII.

WHO AMONG US SHALL DWELL WITH EVERLASTING BURNINGS?—
Isaiah xxxiii, 14.

I AM ready to admit that this is figurative language, but not that on this account it means nothing. Why were figures used but because of the barrenness of language, and to make it more expressive? How foolish, then, to assert that the text is no argument for the existence of hell, inasmuch as the language is figurative! I came not, however, to prove that there is a hell, for you believe it; it is too plain to question. But who of us shall dwell there? I would have you tear yourselves away from earth, and seriously ask, Shall I go where they go who forget God? Think of hell before it shall open upon you. You start back and refuse. Why? It is too unpleasant, you say. Why is it so unpleasant? Let us see.

I. *Because, as sinners, we are exposed to it.*

It is idle for men to say that they do not love to think of hell because the supposition of its existence is absurd; the contrary is more so. Do they say the supposition dishonours God? They care nothing about that; and, besides, hell will honour God as much as heaven, for it will show his justice and love. The fact is, our aversion proceeds from our exposure. We care nothing about dangers which do not affect us or our race—such as the conflagration of distant stars; nor usually about dangers which do not affect our friends. Hence even the most ungodly are not displeased with the thought of hell as “prepared for the devil and his angels;” though it would be hard to show why they should suffer, and the impenitent go clear. Now that it has been also prepared to hold the wicked of our race, why is the thought of it unpleasant? Because, when we come to settle the question in

the text on the principles of the Bible, we see that some of our friends may be there—that we may go there. We are exposed to everlasting burnings! We cannot bear to think thus of our friends or of ourselves.

II. *The thought of it would imbitter life.*

Were one to realize the effects of his sins, would he persist in them? Would the drunkard drink, should he see every dram driving his coffin-nails? Would the thief steal, should he see the progressive twisting of the gallows-rope? Men do not stop to think of the effects. Though they see them in others, *they* hope to escape. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Now thoughts of hell would lead us to see these effects to be awful and eternal. Were men to realize the gnawings of the worm that dieth not, could they sin as cheerfully as they do? No. Men know this, and hence put such thoughts far away; for they are in love with sin, and will not be divorced. "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go."

III. *The thought of it might lead to religion.*

When danger threatens we naturally look for a way of escape. Hell is revealed to us that we may avoid it. Hence it is spoken of as evitable. The way of escape is clearly marked out that we may neither mistake, nor despair. But sinners do not love religion; they love neither its Author, terms, nor nature. They will not think of hell, because they are averse to going to the cross. I appeal to you if, when you have thought of it, you have not said to yourself, "I must secure religion now; but then I do not want it now, so I will drown my thoughts of hell in business or pleasure." The Spirit was leading you, but you broke away. Why would you so peril your soul?

It is important, however, that we meet the question in

the text fairly, and we can do so by the aid of the Bible.

1. We are very soon to enter the future world, where it will be finally settled. As men, as spirits, we are bound to meet it now. How awful to be surprised at last ! How inconsistent to be afraid to think of that which we are every day risking ! O that we feared hell itself as much as we fear the thought of it !

2. It will lead us to close self-examination. Other motives fail to do it, but this cannot. Call up all the horrors of hell, and you instantly ask, Will they be my portion ? You know you can obtain an answer only from the Bible, conscience, and the Spirit. That you have no sympathy with hell, is no proof that you will not go there. They are investigations for eternity, which are thorough and useful.

3. It will arouse our fears for others. Many of our friends are unconverted, for whose salvation we do but little by prayer, exhortation, and other pious efforts. Other motives fail to make us faithful to them, and to overcome our diffidence. Fears of their future misery may avail to do this. "Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ?" See them sinking into hell—and what efforts will you make ? How much does a father risk to save his son from drowning ? How much will he risk to save his soul ? O what a spur would these fears give to our efforts for the salvation of others at home and abroad !

Many of you are living in sin on whom every gentle motive has failed ; and yet you are posting to hell. You are charmed by the siren. Think of *dwelling with everlasting burnings* ! The thought will break the charm ; it will disturb you ; but like the cry of fire, it will lead you to seek for safety. There is no virtue in fear, but it will lead you to the cross ; and there you will be melted, and wooed, and won. Unless you fear, you will never go ;

unless you think, you may never fear. If you think aright, you may never again fear for yourself.

“ *Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*” How suitable to ask, Is it I? Can you answer boldly, No? If not, O repent, believe; for if you do not, you will dwell there! Do not put off the question. You may think me unkind to press it, but I am not half so unkind as you are in risking the danger. Will you risk it longer?

XXIII.

GIVE US OF YOUR OIL; FOR OUR LAMPS ARE GONE OUT.—Matt. xxv, 8.

SUCH was the language of the foolish virgins when surprised by the announcement of the bridegroom’s approach. It implies, 1. A confession of their deficiency. 2. A desire to have it supplied. Without explaining the parable, let us use it as Christ did for the purpose of religious instruction. It teaches us,

I. *That there are seasons when the most careless feel and confess their need of a preparation to meet God.*

That we must all meet God is an admitted fact. The necessity of a preparation for this event arises from our character as sinners. The effects of that meeting will be *eternal*, and hence the preparation must be thorough and careful.

1. When alone we are sometimes unconsciously led to reflections which alarm us. So in company our countenances will sometimes change—we cannot join in the mirth of our companions—we equivocate. In the night we frequently think of death and judgment—troubled dreams awake us—we find no peace.

2. Under the preaching of the gospel. Human accountability, the requisitions of the law, the moral government of God, and eternity, are the great topics which call

up serious thoughts. The Spirit applies the truth to the conscience, and the sinner says in his heart and by his looks, "*I am unprepared.*" Hence the effect which we sometimes see in large congregations. Men feel that they would give all the world for religion, and are led to ask our prayers, and induced to seek salvation.

3. When suffering under the bereavements of Providence. There is something peculiar in affliction to break down the pride of the heart. It will lead us to receive consolation from any one, however low and humble. It causes us to feel differently toward the Bible and prayer. When we visit the grave, we cannot but think on mortality and immortality, and reflect on the lot of the departed in the other world. We are led to ask, What will be my destiny? Then, under the deep impression of the eternity of our existence, we feel our need. How often have our friends and God been witnesses to the vows then made!

4. When in apparent danger. When pestilence walketh abroad, how are the pursuits of men changed! How great the seriousness when the cholera was among us! How little did many care for the world! "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." So in a thunder-storm the gay turn pale as death. Sailing parties have become praying circles. How different in all these scenes is the saint from the sinner! And what makes the difference?

5. When called to die. Generally "all dissimulation is then at an end," and pride yields to the awfulness of the scene. The soul, if fully awake, feels and declares its wants, and reproaches its past actions. It asks for prayer and instruction. Its language is, *Give me of your oil; for my lamp has gone out.* Hence infidels have changed their views in death. Their need is fully open before them, and their requests are urgent. I wish I could carry you to death-beds which I have visited.

II. *The necessity of making this preparation now.*

In regard to other things you are wise ; not so in regard to religion. God has given you the power of foreseeing your wants, and of providing for them. You prepare for winter, for age, but not for death and eternity. We entreat, and warn, and beg, but you neglect. You send for us when life is waning, and the soul departing, but then it is often too late !

1. You know not how soon God will call you. This is a trite, but weighty remark. You admit it, but do not practise on the admission. How numerous are casualties and diseases ! You see death claiming all ages, but are you not presuming on many days ? If you knew when death would come, would you not prepare ? There is more reason you should do so, as you do not know. Mark xiii, 35, 36. Your want of preparation will neither prevent nor delay his coming. How awful to be unprepared !

“How shocking must thy summons be, O death !
 To him that is at ease in his possessions ;
 Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
 Is quite unfurnish'd for the world to come !
 In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
 Raves round the walls of her clay ténement,
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help ;
 But shrieks in vain !”

2. This preparation may now be made. You may be sensible of your wants now ; to-morrow the Spirit may have gone. You may enter now ; to-morrow the door may be shut. You have health and reason now ; to-morrow they may have left you. You know that the present moment alone is yours for this great work. O ! how many die with a lie on their lips—how many with convictions ! But I may press the subject no longer. I feel for you, and would induce you to act. Well may I feel for you, with my belief—my Bible—my love for you—my frequent witnessing of the mortality of my race.

XXIV.

THUS SAITH THE LORD, SET THY HOUSE IN ORDER : FOR THOU SHALT DIE, AND NOT LIVE.—Isaiah xxxviii, 1.

FOR every event we need preparation. In the order of Providence times of preparation are afforded us, as the seasons of the year, and the different periods of life. Many of the failures in the enterprises of men may be attributed to a want of preparation. In proportion to the greatness of the event is preparation requisite. Death is the most important event connected with life, as it is the closing one, and one which immediately precedes that state of existence which is unalterable and eternal. I propose to consider the preparation which is necessary. And I would here remark, that I address those who believe firmly in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and a future state of rewards and punishments, as revealed in the Bible : these topics will be passed over, though they lie at the foundation of all I have to say.

I. *An assurance of our personal acceptance with God through Jesus Christ.*

The natural condition of man is enmity against God. Now when we consider the revealed character of God, we must admit that we are unprepared to meet him. We are to know also that should we appear before him in our state of enmity, we shall be clothed in sin and guilt, and have no excuse to make ; we are to know that God hates sin, and that there will be then nothing to prevent his wrath, our day of mercy having passed. We must feel that we are reconciled and renewed ; that we love God, and have Christ for our righteousness. Learn this from the death of sinners. Nor will faint hopes and evidences suffice. Death will fearfully try our strength, and we

shall need the strongest proof to make us resigned and happy. Learn this from the death of unfaithful saints.

II. *An assurance that we have answered the great purpose of our earthly existence.*

The great object of life is to love God, and do his will. Whenever we have done, to the utmost, the will of God, we may say that the object of life is accomplished, and that we are prepared for heaven. Nor does it matter, in this view of life, whether it be long or short.

“That life is long, which answers life’s great end.”

Summerfield might have done all that God required of him; would you have prevented his removal to a higher and holier sphere? And who is willing to go down to the grave with the feeling that his life has been wasted—that nothing laudable has been done? See the infidel at the moment of death abandon his unbelief! the impenitent commence repenting! the unjust making restitution! the careless begging his friend not to do as he has done! the Christian asking forgiveness of his wife, children, and friends, for not having set them a better example—for not having warned them! O death-beds, what tales ye tell! Why all this? Because conscience reproves—the duties of life have not been discharged—and the soul must thus go, or summon every effort for action. O! what a task for any one, to accomplish life’s great object in his dying strife! Let me feel, when I shall come to die, that all has been done, for it will be quite enough for me to contend with death!

III. *A Scriptural hope that Christ will be with us in our last hour.*

Death is a dark and billowy stream, through which man cannot safely pass alone. His friends can only stand on the bank. Nature fails as he descends and dips his foot. Who will hold up his head? Who introduce him to the

group on the further shore? *None but Christ.* Remember, too, that we must meet death under every natural disadvantage. Go into yonder sick chamber, and gaze upon that fragile form. Disease was long since commissioned by death to commence the fatal attack, and untiringly is it performing its allotted task. Already is every muscle relaxed, and every nerve unstrung. The whole system trembles like a tottering tower. That is the combatant who is to enter the lists with the king of terrors! Does he not labour under great disadvantages?

See that pallid countenance distorted with pain! those heavy, sunken eyes, dejected by distress! that emaciated body, convulsed with agony! But ah! that short, panting breath tells the unequal contest, and the certain end. Exhausted nature, never so tired before, desires a moment's respite. But those lifeless limbs, those cold, cold hands, assure us that death has already taken the outposts, and with a hasty march is approaching the citadel of life. Thither the forces are collected for the last painful struggle.

The battle is renewed. Nature gathers all her resources, puts forth all her efforts; but they are too weak for death! The last blow is struck! One protracted, fearful struggle, one convulsive spasm, one parting breath and dying gasp, and all is over! Those big drops, which so thickly overspread that nerveless brow, proclaim death the conqueror of the body!

I very often anticipate this struggle, and with very peculiar feelings. I know it will be hard and desperate. This spirit will never leave its earthly tabernacle without a conflict. The last gasp—the last groan—the giving up of the ghost—who can describe them? I wish to meet the struggle! For were it left to me this afternoon to decide, whether I would go to heaven in a chariot of fire, like the prophet of old, or through the grave, like my Re-

deemer, I would instantly say, Let me go through the grave. But O! I cannot meet the king of terrors unless Christ be with me to take away his sting! Through the grave I cannot go alone! O no! I must have the assurance that Christ will go with me.

In conclusion; I charge you, my hearers, not to neglect a preparation for death. "*Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.*" I do not know *when* you will die, and hence call upon you to prepare *now*. The uncertainty of death's approach is the strongest possible argument which I can urge to induce you to do so, and it is an argument which Christ has urged before me. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." O! you will have but a poor time, if any time at all, to prepare *then*. Nor will a constant readiness for death unfit you for the duties and enjoyments of life; it is your unfitness which makes you so often sad. Paul was happy when he could say, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

XXV.

O SPARE ME, THAT I MAY RECOVER STRENGTH, BEFORE I GO HENCE,
AND BE NO MORE.—Psalm xxxix, 13.

IT is natural to banish from our minds the thought of death. Rarely do we stop to reflect how soon our days will be finished—to measure the distance which intervenes between us and the grave. There is something repulsive to the unchanged heart in the thought of dying. Nor do I wonder, since death is penal. It tends to mar

man's joys ; to retard his pursuit of pleasure, which is so soon to end—of honour, which is to lie unnoticed in the dust—of riches, of which he must soon be stripped. Men shun the paths which lead to the grave, and if Providence place their feet in them, how unhappy are they ; how eagerly do they seek an escape ! David, however, often dwelt on this subject with melancholy delight ; for he was a saint, and viewed death differently from sinners. His meditations gave rise to the beautiful expression in the text. It implies the consciousness,

1. *That he was fast travelling to the grave.*

That we must all die is an admitted fact. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." "There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death ; and there is no discharge in that war." "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death ?" None doubt that they shall make the grave their bed. Some, however, remove the time to a distance, and think not of the speed of their journey. But how fast are we travelling ! "Swifter than a post"—"swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Are we not forcibly reminded of this by the now closing year ? How long does it seem since it began ? What is our life at the longest ? "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." How much of this vapour has been exhaled ! How much of our time has gone ! Must we not be conscious that we are hastening to the grave ? Who can say he has completed but half of his journey ? Before another year shall have rolled round, he may have reached its end !

2. *That having come to the grave, he should return to earth no more.*

That we shall return not again to earth is also admitted, now that the doctrine of transmigration is exploded. The

grave is the end of life's journey; death the stream over which we cannot repass. "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return." These bodies are left here to return to dust, and to be the subjects of almighty power. At the resurrection, the soul is to be recalled to rejoin its companion, and ascend with it to the bar of God. This is an unpleasant thought to the sinner, for he has made this world his home. Upon it he has placed all his affections. He is unwilling, even in thought, to leave it, for he will not think of futurity; he will be much more unwilling to leave it in person. He prefers earth to heaven, and would live here for ever. Heaven has nothing to entice him, for he loves neither its inhabitants nor employments; and he can carry nothing of earth with him but its guilt. How painful to him to think he can return no more! But how pleasant to the saint! "The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him." His journey was rough and toilsome, and now he is at rest. Would he retrace his steps? In this world he was a stranger, in heaven he is at home. Would he return? Here he was despised and persecuted. "There the wicked cease from troubling." Here he was enticed to sin; there he is allured to virtue. Blessed be God, we leave this world for ever!

3. *That he had much preparation to make before he would be ready to die.*

Unless this were the fact, you may see from what has been said that he could not have had a strong desire to live. The fact will also appear from the consideration that he had correct and glowing views of heaven. We, as Christians, have much preparation to make before we

shall be ready. We must redeem time, correct errors, discharge social duties, and become holy. Who can say, "All these I have done?" Some of you, my hearers, are unconverted. How great your work! Great though it be, it may be done quickly. I know you feel unprepared; you dare not die! Were death to approach, how would you plead for life and beg for mercy!

4. *The text implies a desire to live in order to prepare for death.*

To desire life is natural; few are willing to die. Many wish to live for themselves alone; not to prepare to die; not to please God. They are wedded to the world, and would stay with their bride. They would live even in misery, because they are afraid of death, and its after-state. But all this is wrong. We should desire only to become holy, and to be useful to our friends and to the world. How few of us, in praying for life, are prompted by this motive! We ask, too, for many long years. But who will have them? It becomes us to remember that our prayer may not be granted. Death is all around us! How fearful his ravages the past year! Of some of us God may say, They have been spared long enough—cut them down. Who will fall? Others, for wise purposes, he may take home to himself. We are on death's roll; are we prepared to have our names checked? To the sinner death will be awful—to the saint, delightful.

XXVI.

NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE.—Luke xx, 36.

CHRIST is our greatest benefactor. He hath prepared heaven for us, opened to us the path which leads to it, and given us strength to walk therein. He hath done

every thing to allure us thither. He is its King, and hath shown us his perfections. Who ever saw such wisdom, justice, and love, embodied in one person? Who can doubt that his kingdom is governed well? Who, from the very character of the King, would not desire to dwell there? Besides all this, he has given us the most glowing descriptions of heaven. Rev. vii, 16, 17. If he had said no more of its inhabitants than this, "Neither can they die any more," it would be enough to render a residence there desirable. This will appear evident from the following considerations :—

I. *Death interrupts our pursuits.*

In whatever employment we may engage, we are certain that we can continue it but for a little while. Hence we cannot look for that success which we might otherwise expect. We cannot lay very extensive plans, for we may not live to accomplish them. We engage in the business of life, but, when in successful operation, death overturns our tables—in study, but we can go only so far, and leave others to outstrip us. How sad this thought to the laborious student! Death is so uncertain that we cannot promise ourselves the next day. Where is encouragement then to effort? We are cut down in the midst of our plans—on the threshold of business. We are arrested in the midst of our books—die on the eve of important discoveries. Death will not wait a moment for any man.

The pursuits of heaven cannot be thus interrupted. With what pleasure, then, may we engage in them! What extensive plans may we safely lay, for all eternity is before us! Let me engage in study there, where death is unknown! Let me lay my plans for seraphic wisdom there!

II. *It deprives us of our possessions.*

However great or valuable, we must leave them at the grave. The man of business amasses wealth, but how is

his happiness embittered by the thought that he must leave it all! We build houses and adorn them, but as we walk out to gaze upon them, we feel that we must leave them!

“Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades?
O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!”

Not all we have can purchase one moment's delay! But death comes nearer yet, and separates the soul from the body. He takes away the body to his dark den. It is his for a time to keep.

But heaven's possessions are sure. Death cannot strip us of our riches, our harp, our crown, our robe! Once ours, they are ours for ever! Our bodies, too, renovated and immortal, are ours for ever!

III. *It destroys our earthly pleasures.*

The very thought of death brings sadness over the countenance of the lover of pleasure. Hence it is always banished. How sad to think of pleasure's short duration! What melancholy recklessness in the words, “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die!” But let death come near, with disease and pain, its instruments of destruction, and *how soon does pleasure die!* Eye, ear, and taste, turn away and sicken at the thought! “All is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

But heaven's pleasures are eternal. Disease cannot unfit us for them—time cannot impair them—death cannot destroy them. Who would not enjoy immortal youth, eternal summer, perennial joys?

The exercise of the social affections is one of our greatest sources of pleasure. Hence we form circles of acquaintance, and are happy for a time, till death enters the ring, and it is broken. Where are many of our friends? In the grave! We doat on parents, children,

brothers, sisters ; but death claims them. Where is your father, your mother, your child ? In the grave ! We marry with the certainty that death will soon part us, and too soon does his hour come ! How much pleasure doth he destroy—how much misery produce ! Here “death reigns,” and how many sighs and tears daily attest the universality and cruelty of his reign !

But in heaven there is no death and no separation. There friends meet, to part not again. There the families of the faithful unite, to be torn asunder no more. They are “ever with the Lord.” Ask the forlorn, but Christian mourner, if the absence of death does not make heaven desirable ?

IV. *It removes us to an untried and unchanging state of existence.*

This renders it so dreadful to sinners. What is after death ? they ask—they fear. We like not untried scenes. That state is unchanging, and this renders hell so awful. But if we reach heaven, death can remove us no more, for we shall be at home. There will be no untried state to visit. We shall not be carried where there are changes from joy to sorrow, for joy is there unchanged for ever.

How consoling these truths to the saint ! Especially under the afflictions of life—when parting with friends—when wrestling with death. Christians, ye know the way to heaven ; O, press forward with alacrity and delight ! Shall we not meet there, when life’s scenes are over, to die no more ?

Unconverted friends, will you go with us ? The way is rough, but straight ;—thorny, but short. Who would a toilsome and a painful journey heed, to gain such a home ?

XXVII.

WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM.—1 John iii, 2.

IT is painful to the Christian to witness his own numerous imperfections. However great may be his attainments, he is still sensible of imperfections, and of the vast distance between him and Christ. He may say with Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, [the resurrection state,] either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And with David, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." It is also painful to behold the imperfections of our brethren; we believe them Christians, but O! how many defects remain in them! When, we ask, will they all be removed? We rejoice to reflect, that the day is coming when a mighty change shall be wrought in the sons of God! "*We shall be like him.*" This more perfect resemblance is reserved for the second coming of Christ. For our comfort we are permitted to look forward to it.

I confess I am unable to give you a full view of this subject, because I am so ignorant of Christ. True, he appeared on earth, and exhibited traits of character such as the world never saw; and from these I learn that he was kind, good, faithful, compassionate, and holy; but how little do these reveal to me of Him! All these were manifested through the body, and how much it may have diminished their effect, who knoweth? Christ, too, appeared in his humiliation, not in his glory. In the trans-

figuration, (Matt. xvii, Luke ix,) for a moment he was glorious. We may view him also as possessing the attributes of God. These he claims, and these he exhibited on earth. We are not, however, at liberty to infer that we shall be like him in this respect, for the attributes of God belong to God alone. They are the properties of the infinite—we are finite; angels have them not. We may infer, however, that all our capacities are infinitely to enlarge in a moment—that we may know more than we ever could know here (1 Cor. xiii, 12)—and that we may increase in holiness eternally. I say increase, for we must first be holy in order to see the Lord. What, then, may we conceive is implied in being like Christ? I answer, an entire freedom from all the effects and marks of sin. Let us carefully and devoutly dwell on this single idea.

We have every reason to believe that sin has very materially affected our bodies. It has destroyed much of their beauty by diseases and the influence of the passions. The Saviour appeared on earth in a body like ours. But he has not this body now as it was on earth, for when he arose from the grave it was spiritual and glorious. It was no longer flesh and blood. 1 Cor. xv, 50. We shall be like the Saviour in this respect. Phil. iii, 21, and 1 Cor. xv, 49-53. All this implies that every mark of sin is to be for ever obliterated. We are to be perfectly beautiful. When we view the ravages of sin, and their completion in the grave, I know this seems surprising and impossible. Go with me to yonder grave-yard as the sun is slowly sinking in the western horizon. Pursue that long path so often watered by the mourner's tears, till you reach "the house appointed for all living." Spring back that heavy bolt, and turn upon its grating hinges that massive iron door. Descend those rough-hewn stones. O! these sepulchral damps tell fearfully of corruption! Slowly and

reverently approach that solitary coffin, which shall not always lack its fellow. Upraise that mouldering lid—O! awful sight!—O! ghastly death! But be calm, my soul. Approach again, and take a nearer view. Those bones stand out in horrible relief; the flesh has long since seen corruption. Not a sign of life is there, except those crowds of thievish worms. And yet, but a few short months ago, she was among the fairest of ye all, and bowed as reverently at the altar of our God. O, what a change! And can she be changed again? Yes, glorious truth! this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and we shall be changed! 1 Cor. xv.

Would you know more respecting this interesting subject, learn it from distinct passages of Scripture. We shall sit at God's right hand. Would you know the greatness of this privilege? The psalmist answers, "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The prophet Daniel says, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Would you fully comprehend this exalted language, remember it was written in Chaldea, where astronomy was the noblest science, and the starry firmament the most glorious object upon which the eye of man could gaze. The apostle says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." And what is its nature? It "fadeth not away;" eternity, as it revolveth, but addeth to its glory. The Saviour, after briefly rehearsing the solemn scenes of the judgment, and the awful events which will succeed them, says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." What significancy is there in this glowing

figure? What object, in reply, I ask you, is more glorious than yonder sun shining in the fulness of his strength? So bright are his rays that as you fix your wandering gaze upon them, your vision fails, and you turn away dazzled and overpowered. And yet "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." They are to be like Him who is the Sun of heaven itself!

Christ had no mark of sin on his mind and soul. Perfect in both he ever was and is. He knew no sin. 2 Cor. v, 21. In this respect we shall be like him. This is plain from Rev. vii, 14: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." O flowing streams from Calvary, how unearthly your efficacy, thus to heal the wounds, and remove the scars of sin! O blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, how heavenly thy virtue, thus to cleanse us from all sin!

There may be diversity in our minds and feelings, but all will be lovely. Our fiery trial here shall burn up all sin, destroy all its marks, and melt away all dross. Altogether lovely He is, and we shall be. O how wonderful! Angels, if they knew not, might never imagine we had been sinners, except from our song. I know it doth not seem possible, for "it doth not yet appear." But "in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

In conclusion: Do not say all this is mere conjecture. It is not; it is plainly Scriptural and logical inference. If faithful, I shall see all this, and more than I can now conceive; and shall be fully satisfied.

1. We learn that heaven must be a place of unbounded felicity. What better society could be found? There all

are beautiful in body, all lovely in soul. And then there are the angels, and the Lamb of God. Will good society render us happy in the most unpleasant places on earth? Much more then in heaven. Rev. xxi, 4, and vii, 15-17.

2. We see why Christians anticipate so much from meeting with friends in heaven. We admit that here they have natural traits of character which we dislike; that we do not always feel happy in their society. But they will lose every thing that is unlovely at death, and so shall we. We would not live for ever with our friends as they now are, but we would when they are like Christ. Yes, dear brother, in heaven you will possess every thing which shall render your society delightful.

XXVIII.

WE LOOK NOT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN, BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN: FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORAL; BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL.—2 Cor. iv, 18.

FAITH is the great peculiarity of the Christian system. It is necessary not only for the purposes of moral discipline, but also because almost every thing that renders Christianity desirable is unseen. God, the Redeemer, the Comforter, angels, and heaven, are unseen. Their invisibility, however, does not affect their reality, and should not affect our belief. Our minds and all their operations are invisible, but our belief in them is none the less firm on this account. "The things which are not seen" are *eternal*; and does not this make amends for all? What we see, however bright and beautiful, "appeareth but for a little time, and then vanisheth away." This fair earth, these glorious skies with all their starry hosts, are moving slowly and sublimely to the grave of

nature. Turn then, O Christian, from the sight, and gaze on nobler scenes. In so doing it is your privilege to consider,

1. *Their nearness.* We are prone to look at eternity as at an immeasurable distance—the rear ground in the picture of human life, obscured by intervening objects. But God designed it should stand out in bold relief, for he has painted it with the brightest colours. What if you should live seventy years—eternity is close by; compare seventy years with eternity, and see how short the term is. But life is generally shorter than this, and is also uncertain. Death, the dividing stream, which you are approaching, is but a few steps wide. Eternity then is close at hand.

2. *Their unchangeableness and eternal duration.* Here we are so accustomed to change that we can hardly conceive of any thing as absolutely fixed. Our characters, pursuits, enjoyments, friends, are changing. There character changes not in kind, nor degenerates: how consoling this to the saint! There he will never grow cold. There pursuits and enjoyments will be ever the same. There friends will be always with us, and ever loving us. Besides the unchangeableness of unseen things, consider their eternal duration. If not eternal they would be of little worth, and sighs would form the chorus of every song. But they are eternal! I cannot describe eternity—it is a separate state of existence—it knows no multiplication of time.

3. *Their power of conferring happiness.* There would be little joy in reflecting on the particulars already named, without this. Sinners take no delight in reflecting on unseen things, for they can expect no happiness from them. But it is their power of conferring happiness, which renders them delightful subjects of reflection to the Christian. This made them so dear to Paul. All things in the eternal world will make us perfectly happy.

But why should we look at unseen things ?

1. *That our thoughts and affections may be detached from earth.* We “are of the earth, earthy.” How much our thoughts are engrossed with its objects and pursuits ! How much time do we devote to them ! How often do they intrude into the sanctuary, and steal into the closet ! With what a deadly grasp do our affections cling to them ! Let our property be taken from us, and how we murmur and grieve ;—our friends, and how we mourn and weep ! But we are soon to become spiritual beings, conversant only with spiritual objects. How necessary that our thoughts and affections become so likewise ! What will make them so but constantly looking at unseen things ? How can we love earth less, but by loving heaven more ?

2. *That we may be encouraged to persevere in the path of duty.* We are apt to faint, our trials are so great—to despond, our afflictions are so numerous—to despair, our foes are so hostile, and our battles so many. Heaven in prospect will animate us. It will make afflictions seem light and transient—toils easy—dangers small. ‘The last is coming. How is the weary traveller invigorated by the sight of home ! ‘The warrior when the drum beats the last alarm ! What deeds of valour will he perform ! And who in the Christian warfare would shrink back when the shout of victory will so soon be heard, and eternity be our home ? Eternal rest and deliverance ! This supported Moses, and Paul, and the martyrs.

3. *That we may be prepared for their enjoyment.* For all this joy we were made. We must prepare for it by looking at it. ‘The more we look, the more we shall love—the more we love, the more we shall strive. Could you now join in the heavenly song ? Should heaven break in upon you now, would you not be frightened ? Alas ! have we not looked too much at earth, and too little at heaven ?

And shall we not amend? O let not eternity at last surprise us unprepared!

The mariner, as he thinks he nears the shore, sends one aloft, not to gaze at the water or the sky, but to look for land. So the Christian should keep faith upon the watch, to look not around, but beyond him; and soon the lofty cliffs, and bold promontories of "the better land" will heave in view.

XXIX.*

SOME TRUST IN CHARIOTS, AND SOME IN HORSES: BUT WE WILL REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD.—Psalm xx, 7.

CIVIL liberty is the greatest of national blessings. Like all other blessings, it is the gift of God, purchased by Christ, and obtained and perpetuated by human means. In the attainment of ours, the hand of God was clearly seen in the raising up of men to guide our counsels, and command our armies—in affording us foreign aid when our cause grew desperate—and in rendering foolish the plans of our enemies. In reverting to the past, as Christians, "we will remember the name of the Lord our God." In looking to the future, our hope and trust must still be in "the name of the Lord our God;" for he alone can secure to us the blessings of civil liberty. This appears evident from two considerations:—

I. *All other means have failed to preserve the liberties of nations.*

It becomes us to remember the fact, that no nation which has not worshipped God has, for a long time, been free. Greece and Rome were republics but in name, and

* A Thanksgiving sermon.

the people ruled only through demagogues. From this fact it has been doubted by many whether republics can be permanent. Our nation is to decide the question; and if she forget God, her decision will but strengthen the chains of despotism.

1. Wealth cannot perpetuate civil liberty. It may fortify cities, muster armies, and create navies, but it cannot give them efficiency. Rome possessed it, and it was the tyrant that destroyed her. The natural tendency of wealth is to produce luxury, increase effeminacy, and create licentiousness. All these are deadly foes to liberty. Wealth creates aristocracy, which can exist in the bosom of no republic with safety. A moneyed aristocracy is now more fearful and more powerful than one of rank.

2. Power cannot preserve liberty. Power ungoverned is an enemy to law, the basis of liberty. It leads to insurrection and revolt. Mobs have shown this in our land. Power without union affords no means of defence against foes. Like a machine from which the balance-wheel is removed, it is destructive. But union, permanent and effective, is the result only of virtue derived from God.

3. Knowledge is said to be the great thing necessary for the preservation of liberty. Knowledge alone, however, has no such preserving power. Greece and Rome proved this long ago; and France, in later times, has added her mournful testimony.

II. *Revelation alone contains the basis of civil liberty.*

The Bible is the great text-book which should be carefully studied by every statesman, that he may be instructed in the true principles of government: for,

1. It alone reveals the law of reciprocity, which is the basis of all liberty. It regulates the love which we should feel toward man, and the actions which we should perform, as well as the desires of our own hearts. Would all obey it, all would be free, though not independent of

each other. This law can be found nowhere else. The volume of nature does not contain it.

2. It contains the principles, and promotes the spirit of that union which is necessary to liberty. It shows the relation which we all sustain to God, and to each other, and thus leads to equality of feeling. It binds men together by similarity of views and interests. It strengthens the bonds by acts of kindness and reciprocity.

3. It alone affords motives sufficient to induce man to obey the law of reciprocity. Natural affection would prompt him to act upon it only toward his personal friends. Thus each family circle would consider itself the regency for all the world, and would be disposed to tyrannize over all the world. Selfishness would induce him to love his fellow-men only so far as might appear for his own good; and where he might not perceive how his own good would be thus promoted, it would lead him to disregard the welfare of others; it would even prompt him to cast off the restraints of society, and annul its laws, whenever they might seem opposed to his interest. There are no human motives sufficient to curb our passions, or regulate our actions. Nothing but the retributions of eternity, as revealed in the Bible, can lead men to act right toward each other, and toward God.

4. It alone secures means for the promulgation of its principles. Had it been left to man, the Bible would not now be known; the great charter of liberty would have long since been lost. It secures the means, however, for the promulgation of its principles, 1. By commissioning men to be teachers thereof. Were there no Bible, there would be no preachers, and no basis for lessons of morality and religion. But by these the fires of liberty are kept alive. 2. By giving its teachers, through its promises of aid, success, and everlasting life, the necessary moral courage.

Civil liberty is continued to us by God. Let us gratefully acknowledge his name. Let us trust in it alone, in the use of means, for the future. Let us show our gratitude by obeying his word, and disseminating its principles.

XXX.*

I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.—Luke ii, 10.

THE advent of Christ is the most remarkable event which our world has ever witnessed. It had seen philosophers who discovered its laws, laid open its bosom, and revealed its secrets to the astonishment of mortals—poets who described its scenery in glowing language—warriors who waded through blood to conquest—but never before had it seen God manifested in the flesh. It had beheld embassies from conquerors to rebel nations, but never had it seen the Lord coming to his creatures—the King of heaven to worms of the dust—the Sovereign of the universe to rebellious mortals! The object for which he came rendered the event still more remarkable. To be humbled, that we might be exalted; to suffer, that we might be happy; to die, that we might live; to subdue the world, not by arms, but by love; to revolutionize it, not by warlike armies, but by peaceful principles. Is it not the most remarkable event which the universe has witnessed? Was not heaven astonished? If ever an event called for the appearance of angels, and the display of God's glory, it was this. Nor were they withheld. And to calm the fears of the affrighted shepherds, the angel said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy." Are not the words true? Let us consider the effects of the advent of Christ,

* A Christmas sermon.

I. On man's temporal condition.

The history of the world up to the advent exhibits a picture of mutability variegated by cruelty, coloured with blood. One nation, by adventure and war, gradually emerged from obscurity, gained the ascendancy over others, and made progress in improvement, till, unnerved by sin, it was conquered and enslaved. Another then in the same way rose and fell. Thus men were alternately masters and slaves. Thus was it with Egypt, once renowned; thus with Greece, now living only in story. Hence there was nothing to soften man's barbarity—no proper time for improvement, for the formation of domestic institutions—no time except for self-preservation and protection. There was no ground to hope for better times. Christ came to do away oppression and war, to reveal and establish domestic institutions, and thus give man time to improve his condition. Wherever the gospel has gone, it has done this partially. It will do it wholly and universally. The time will come when “nation shall not lift up a sword against nation,” &c. Micah iv, 3, 4. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy-mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

II. On his moral condition.

Before the advent this was deplorable. Our world was deep in sin. Men knew not God, knew not the attributes which he should possess. Their moral codes were defective and bad. The most abominable vices were approved. There was no hope for improvement; the tendency of man is to grow worse; the world did so. Moral principles could not be settled for want of knowledge; nor promulgated for want of authority. What could the despairing man do? Judea's light was exclusive; worse than this, it was going out! But here Christ interposed. He came to enlighten not merely Judea, but the world;

to show us God—our relation to him—to each other—our duties ; and to afford means, authority, and motives, for the dissemination of this knowledge. How have morals improved since ? Through its influence pagan philosophy was overthrown, heathenism routed. Every other system of morals is declining, and the gospel advancing ! “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.” “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” “Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

III. *On his everlasting destiny.*

Thick darkness respecting this hung over the Gentile world. None had pierced it, or could do so. Many doubted the immortality of the soul. How distressing that doubt which conflicted with the instinctive desire for immortality ! The heaven of the wise was sensual and unsatisfying. It was exclusive—for the great alone. O my soul, how awful must have been the condition of the common man tormented by conscience, desire, doubt, and fear ! Christ came, and brought to light our immortality—our resurrection—and heaven, in its nature, and its terms of admission. He came to allure us thither by his love and grace : how important this, when we consider our sinfulness ! Who could reach heaven without such aid, even if he knew the way ? You could not soar to glory without it ! Is it not “good tidings of great joy ?” What is time to eternity ? What the worth of the soul ? Learn from its nature, destiny, and redemption !

I have no language to tell the value of Christ’s advent. No, nor ever shall have, in heaven ; it will ever be untold ! Go to the mourner bending over the grave ; say to her, “The soul is in heaven ; you may see it there, perfectly

happy ; the body itself shall be raised in beauty ;” and ask, Is it not “ good tidings of great joy ?” Ask the heathen, who faints beneath life’s load, as you point him to a bright world of rest and of eternal joy. Ask the dying saint. Tell him he is leaving a world of sin, is suffering *his last pain, baffling his last enemy*—and as you see him die, and hear him shout, this is his response, “ Glory !”

Who of us will not receive these tidings with great joy ? To us they have come—come too with the view of their effects. Can you help crying out for joy ? If so, will not the stones cry out against you ? You will never again hear such tidings. Better than news that the world is yours—for it says heaven may be yours. Can you shut your ears against it ? O we would not believe it, if men’s actions did not constrain us so to do !

Shall we not love Christ with all our hearts ? Who hath done so much for us—sacrificed so much for us ? Who loves us so well as He, and who so lovely, who so worthy to be loved ? O hard must be that heart which will not beat with affection for Christ ! Cold that bosom, which will not be warmed by a dying Saviour’s love !

XXXI.*

WITH DESIRE I HAVE DESIRED TO EAT THIS PASSOVER WITH YOU BEFORE I SUFFER.—Luke xxii, 15.

THERE is peculiar beauty in many of the expressions of the Saviour. They indicate a soul full of tender emotions, and anxious to communicate blessings to others. Finer specimens of tenderness and love cannot be found than his parting conversations and interviews with his disciples previous to his crucifixion. “ Let not your heart be troubled,” &c., John xiv. Beautiful were the dying

* A sacramental sermon.

words of Socrates, and consoling to his friends his conjectures of immortality; but infinitely more sweet and consoling were the words of Christ; there is an air of unearthliness about them, unlike the words of our dying friends. In him all human affections were exactly balanced, while heavenly love was the mistress of the whole. "He spake as never man spake."

He desired to eat this passover with his disciples, because,

1. *It was the last time.* Long since has it been observed, that human beings prize many things from the fact that they are the last. Thus the missionary, who is about to expatriate himself, visits the home and scenes of his youth, and all seem to him invested with new charms; fields and woods are parting friends. So the dying man asks to be seated at the table once more before he dies, and to him and his it is a scene of deep and mournful interest, for it is *the last*. So we revert to the last conversation with our departed friends, with all its mournful scenes, and we carry their remembrance through the walks of life. Christ had many times sat with his disciples around the social board—had seen their homely fare—known their sorrows;—but now the last time had come. He had all the sinless feelings of a man, and could not but be affected; memory, association, and imagination, operated in him to make it solemn. What would become of that family in their wanderings without its father—that band without its captain!

2. *It was also the last time the passover itself could be appropriately celebrated.* There is in us all a veneration for ancient rites and ceremonies, especially if instituted by high authority, and in commemoration of great events. Hence the festive days of pagans—their games, &c. Hence the celebration of the fourth of July, which will continue while our liberty remains. The passover was

very ancient—was instituted with great solemnity—by the highest authority—in commemoration of the greatest event connected with Jewish history—to prefigure the greatest event connected with the history of the world. Solemn must it have been to know it was now to cease for ever. No father, in after time, would receive the smiles of Heaven as he should slay the lamb!

3. *It was the appointed time for the institution of the most affecting ordinance of Christianity.* The hour was fast approaching when Christ was to be crucified—the plan of his betrayal and capture was laid—the price of blood agreed upon. Their rite was the type of the crucifixion; and must it not have brought it all to his mind? Must there not have been struggles at the thought of so much suffering? But moments were precious; before another meal all would be finished. This event was now to be imbodied in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. 'Tis done; the bread and wine are emblems of his death. How would you feel to see your coffin? But how high must infinite love have swelled his bosom? "*Given for you!*" How sweet the thought that it was to be kept in memory through all time—to soften and cheer the hearts of all saints who should celebrate it—to be the memorial of love to the universe—to cheer the bed of death! The holy raptures of saints on earth and in heaven were the picture which Christ saw.

Peculiar must be the feelings of every saint who contemplates this ordinance. If he have enlarged views of religion, as the time of its celebration draws nigh, he will desire to eat this passover,

1. *That he may give the token and pledge of his love to the universal church.* Those places are honoured and courted by us which have been the scenes of great events, and of the frequent visitation of the wise and good. As we visit them, we are inspired by the noble

feelings to which the events give rise, and hold communion with those who have had similar feelings. Hence Plymouth, and Palestine, are visited with interest. The communion table is the commemorating scene of an event which eclipses all others; it brings to mind the garden and the cross, with all their melting scenes, and also the object and blessings which they secured,

“These sacred signs thy suff’rings, Lord,
To our remembrance bring.”

It has been visited by the great and good for eighteen hundred years. The highest saints in heaven bowed lowest here. We mingle in the scene and visit the place, as a token of fellowship with saints on earth and in heaven, and as the pledge of relationship and love to them. Who would not thus ally himself to the church below, above?

2. *That he may manifest his love to Christ, and his entire dependance on his sacrificial death.* It was in memory of Him who loved you unto death—who purchased for you every temporal and spiritual favour—who is your all in health and sickness—in prosperity and adversity—in time and eternity, that this rite was instituted. Who that loves the Saviour, realizes his favours, and is grateful, will not commemorate his death?

3. *Because it may be the last time.* We shall not be called to suffer as did Christ, neither in manner, nor for the same object. But we must die; and in view of the pains, agonies, and partings at death, we may justly call it the hour of suffering. It is possible, nay probable, some of us may reach that hour before another sacramental season! We should act in view of this probability. How would you look forward to this season, if sure it were *the last*? Fathers in Israel, what emotions would throb your breasts? How busy would be your memory, how warm your love, how tender your hearts! It would be a parting

scene! How active would be your faith! "I am going to heaven to see my Jesus—to sit at his table. Shall I see you there?"

But I must stop; the time has come to gather round the table. Jesus waits to feast you now. Blessed thought! Are you not eager to come that you may give the token of love to the universal church—that you may manifest your love to Christ, and your entire dependance on his sacrificial death—feeling, too, that it may be the last time?

XXXII.*

HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE.—Prov. xi, 30.

THE world is estranged from God and joined to Satan. The gospel proposes to bring man back from Satan to God. The means which it authorizes for the accomplishment of this great object are moral means only—argument and expostulation. Hence the true preaching of the gospel is not a compulsory, but a winning process. When you consider the infinite importance of the object, the nature of the work, and its consequences, you will readily admit that he who would win souls must obtain wisdom as a prerequisite.

As Christians, we all admit that the minister must possess wisdom in its highest sense; that is, *sound and ardent piety*. Upon this in a great degree depend the correctness of his doctrines, and the purity of his life; without this he cannot expect the aid of the Spirit, which alone can render his preaching instrumental in the salvation of men. At the present day, however, something more than piety is necessary. The gift of tongues has

* Preached on behalf of the New-England Wesleyan Education Society.

ceased, the power of working miracles has been suspended, and plenary inspiration has been withdrawn; the Spirit will not supply the place of these, while Providence opens the way for the attainment of other powers which may be equally serviceable. We are not placed in the line of prophets and apostles, and of course are not to go forward as they did, without human preparation, relying on divine aid alone to furnish us with thoughts, arguments, and illustrations. He must be either ignorant, fanatical, or presumptuous, who would advise such a course. Smooth stones from the brook of learning thrown with skill, the Spirit will make efficacious in the destruction of error. In addition to piety, then, the minister needs a good education, in order to preach so as,

1. *To interest.* You must all have noticed that men look much to style and manner. It is so in lecture-rooms, and public assemblies generally. It is not enough that the speaker have just ideas and good thoughts; these must be well clothed, and well communicated; he must either charm or awe, else he is neglected. If this be necessary in the discussion of subjects to which men are not averse, it must be more so in the discussion of those subjects for which they have an aversion, as they have for the subject of experimental religion. Whence the popularity of Whitefield and Summerfield? They had something more than piety. Churches now understand this in settling their ministers. They have learned from the advocates of error the power of style and eloquence to gather and retain assemblies. Error has spread by employing the weapons of language, and thus truth must spread. The reason is, you were made intellectual beings, and as such must be affected by style and eloquence.

2. *To instruct.* The mere reading of the Bible does not answer the purposes of preaching, else you would need only pastors. It must be explained and enforced:

in order to this the minister must know enough to teach. He must be acquainted with,

1. The nature and power of language. You do not understand men sometimes because they do not use proper language. Thousands of controversies have arisen about mere words. To acquire this knowledge is no small task.

2. Biblical literature. He must understand the customs of those who lived at the time the Scriptures were written. The languages also in which they were written must be known by many, else the Bible would be, as it were, a sealed book. Controverted points demand this knowledge of the original languages ; and are not the most important points now controverted ?

3. Illustrations and analogies. These are needed to explain truth—to show how Christianity is in harmony with creation and providence. They are drawn from the arts, sciences, history, &c. ; but who can use them unless he have them at command ? And how can he command them unless educated ?

4. The evidences of Christianity. These are now called in question, for this is an infidel age. New theories are introduced, and new discoveries open the way for the skeptic to wrangle. The minister must be prepared to defend and to overthrow. You *expect* in him this preparation, and you know that he must become prepared by study.

5. The power of reasoning. This requires knowledge as the data, and a disciplined mind as the instrument ; the more of both the better. But the mind can be disciplined only by study ; and who can instruct without knowledge ? What is empty declamation ? It is truth, its evidences, claims, and consequences, which we need to exhibit, and these the Spirit enforces.

We call on you to favour the object of this society with

your prayers and your money. Men are required to go forth and preach, and God requires you to fit them. On you the responsibility rests of supplying the world with efficient men. Will you do it? In lending your aid to our cause you will walk in the steps of Wesley, carry on the design of Methodism, and promote the cause of God.

What will you do? How much are souls worth? How much did Christ sacrifice for you? What answer then will you make?

XXXIII.

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.
—2 Tim. ii, 15.

THE great design of the gospel is to bring back this revolted world to allegiance to God, and, by the atonement and its consequent benefits, to raise men to heaven. All this, however, is to be done by means; this is God's economy. Hence he sent forth apostles and others to preach the gospel, designing that this system of means should continue to the end of time. To ministers, as was necessary, he hath given instruction relative to their great work. The text is that divine instruction given by Paul, just before his decease, to Timothy. Let us consider its import.

I. *Ministers should seek the approbation of God alone.*

It is natural to seek the approbation of our fellow-men; love of praise is one great impulse to effort. Ministers have peculiar temptations to indulge this passion, in order to collect large congregations, ensure popularity, and a handsome support. Hence the need of the text. They

must value "the praise of men" only when it is given to their consistency and piety, and then *only as a means of doing good*. The reasonableness of this appears from the following facts :—

1. The approbation of men is given to sin. The state of the world shows this ; did not men approve of sin, they would not practise it. Christ was perfect virtue personified ; but men crucified him. Human nature, though almost deified by many, is the same now. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Hence ministers should not seek human applause.

2. Ministers are God's ambassadors. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." They receive their message from him, are bound to obey implicitly his orders, and to seek his glory. *As ministers*, they are accountable to him alone. They are to be recalled soon to render to him their commission, and from him receive their reward. Hence they are to seek his favour only.

3. The success of their embassy depends entirely on his approbation. He alone can give them strength, instruction, and the Holy Spirit ; and these he will not give unless he approve. Without these all their efforts must be fruitless. "Without me ye can do nothing."

The approbation of their Master must be their constant aim in all their studies, visits, sermons, &c. To secure it they must exert themselves to the utmost.

II. *They should be workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

In order to this two things are indispensable.

1. A theoretical and experimental acquaintance with the subject of their embassy. Hence they should study the Bible with prayer and diligence, and should also avail themselves of all aids to this study, as far as their means permit. They should be experimentally acquainted with the nature of repentance, faith, and Christian experience.

2. A life in accordance with the gospel. Ministers should be examples to others, and thus show the possibility of carrying the theory of religion into practice. They, like others, are liable to sin ; but the gospel can be obeyed, and they are to prove it by their lives.

“*Rightly dividing the word of truth.*” As a labourer, the minister is to apply the principles of the gospel to all the minutiae of life, public, social, and private. He is to give to every man his portion in due season. To the *Christian* he must give instruction, advice, reproof, comfort, and encouragement, such as are adapted to his wants, and at the time they are needed. Hence the necessity of ascertaining his wants by conversation and watchful observation.

To the *sinner* he must exhibit both the terrors of the law and the offers of the gospel.

To the *penitent* he must show the way of reconciliation, and the promises of God, and thus lead him to Christ.

To the *hypocrite* he must declare that his hope will perish, and that without repentance he will be lost for ever.

The *apostate* he must urge to return to God, on pain of eternal banishment from his presence.

The minister has duties to discharge to the whole community. His field is the world. He must watch the signs of the times—learn what are the prevailing sins—show their nature, their consequences, and the remedy in the gospel. The community may frown and persecute ; he may leave them as did Christ’s disciples, but while he remains he must rightly divide the word of truth.

He must do this with a right spirit. No wrath of his must be mixed with his preaching. He must be bold as an ambassador, but kind ; fearless, but affectionate. He must trust in the protection of his Master. “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Christ will provide friends, and through them food and raiment.

He must do this with right motives. Love to God and man, and nothing else, must enlist him in the war, and prompt to every effort. Unless he have this he is deficient, whatever else he may have.

Thus did Paul rightly divide the word of truth. Hence he could say, "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Also 2 Cor. i, 12; 2 Tim. iv, 6-8. Hence his success. God will crown with similar success every one that *studieth to show himself approved unto him, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* How carefully and perseveringly should we then labour! God help me to make full proof of my ministry! And "not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

XXXIV.

OWE NO MAN ANY THING, BUT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.—Rom. xiii, 8.

THE gospel is not only a revelation of God's love toward us, but also of his will concerning us. Hence it prescribes the duties which we owe to him and to each other. It lays down rules for the regulation of our conduct in all our various relations.

As a code of morals, it far excels all other codes which the world has seen. It is comprehensive, minute, just, and holy. If men would obey it, they would be happy. The morals of the gospel are inseparably connected with its doctrines; the duty of ministers is to explain the latter, and enforce the former. I propose, therefore, to enforce

this divine moral precept, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another."

I. *Owe no man property or money.*

Such is our dependance on each other, and such the nature and condition of society, that an exchange of commodities is absolutely requisite to our subsistence and happiness. This exchange is effected either by barter or sale. In both cases we receive one article in return for its equivalent. Our text requires that we should render the stipulated equivalent when, according to the condition of the contract, it becomes due. Refusing so to do is a breach of morality. It is the creditor's right of which we deprive him; it is his property which, contrary to our implied, if not expressed promise, and contrary to his wishes, we keep in our possession. What is it then, in fact, but lying and stealing, provided we are able to pay?

So with outlawed debts. The law of limitation was made to lead men to settle their accounts and to prevent litigation; not to release the debtor. Is it not enough to keep me from my property for years, without using this law as a pretext to wrong me out of it for ever? You are discharged in a civil, but not in a moral view. Having my property for six years does not prove that you never had it, or do not owe me.

So in cases of insolvency, where you have paid perhaps twenty-five or fifty per cent., and have afterward become rich. Your creditors took that proportion from necessity, not from choice—not as an equivalent, but as all they could get. You will not be clear of debt in Heaven's sight until you shall have tendered full payment, if at any time able to do so.

So with subscriptions for periodicals, and for the support of public institutions, whether benevolent or religious. You make the promise, and receive the equivalent; you

are consequently as much bound to fulfil your promise as you are to pay the bills of your grocer. "But what if I am unable?" Did you become so by extravagance or affliction? Tell your story simply, and *do all you can*.*

II. *Owe no man ill-will.*

If a man injures us, we retaliate at the time, or lay it up against him; it is very natural to seek and improve occasions to pay him. We are not required to give him an opportunity to injure us again, nor to think as well of him as before; for we cannot shut our eyes to what we have seen. We are not to put a viper to our bosoms after he has bitten us. Yet we must not avenge ourselves on any man who has injured us, nor harbour ill-will against him; but we must forgive and love him. This we can do. Matt. vi, 12; Luke xi, 4; Matt. xviii, 21, 22; Matt. v, 44; Rom. xii, 20, 21.

III. *We owe any man confession and reparation, if we have injured his feelings or character.*

Duty requires us to warn and reprove men, but we must do it kindly, and they ought not to feel injured; but if we wantonly or carelessly, by deed or word, trifle with their feelings, the least we can do is to make confession. This is the only noble part; the golden rule requires it. Duty may call on us to expose a man's sins; but if we wantonly slander him by insinuations, exaggerations, false or partial statements, we must make all possible reparation immediately. This rule holds in regard to property; (even Judas made restitution;) why not in regard to character? "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

* The practice of contracting debt, without a reasonable prospect of being able to make payment, might have appropriately been introduced in this connection. It is, unhappily, too common a practice, even among those who profess to be governed by the precepts of the gospel; one of which is, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another."—Eph.

“Who steals my purse, steals trash ;—
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.”

IV. *You owe every man a debt of love.*

How much ? As much as you have for yourself. This you owe every day, and daily must you make payment. How ? By benevolence and acts of charity according to your means ; by exhortation, good example, and prayer. Do you try to pay your relatives, friends, and neighbours ? your enemies, strangers, and the world ?

Perhaps you may think I delight in preaching what are called “plain sermons ;” that of late I dwell only upon the severer parts of the gospel. I do it because I am interested for you. I speak it not boastingly, for I am bound to be so ; and after all that I have done—all that I can yet do—I shall still be as I now am, in the sight of my Master, only an unprofitable servant. That I am interested for you, I appeal to my closet, my study, this pulpit, and my private and public life. I appeal to my waking hours and to my sleeping moments. But yesternight in troubled dreams was I walking your aisles, entering your pews, and begging you to repent ! But O, the sequel !—with a careless, heartless smile you repulsed me !

I beseech you, try to obey the precept of the text, for your own sakes, for the sake of your friends, for the sake of the church. Do not be a reproach and a curse ! But you cannot obey it without divine assistance. You can have this, if you will accept it. May God help you !

XXXV.

WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP.—Gal. vi, 7.

THE law of cause and effect is universal. By this law I mean the necessary connection and order which exist between events as antecedents and consequents. This connection and order are of divine appointment, and will continue till the world shall be destroyed. Were there no connection between cause and effect, we should have no incentive to exertion; through ignorance we should be unable to take care of ourselves.

I. *This law exists in morals.*

Men are slow to admit this position, because in morals the connection between cause and effect is not always clearly seen; as in cases of concealed murder. The effect also is long delayed; and “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” But there are plain reasons for this delay; this is a dispensation of mercy, not of justice; a probationary state, and hence there is a necessary, though partial and temporary, suspension of the effect; it is the seed-time, not the harvest. Be not deceived, however, these things will be adjusted soon. The connection is plain enough to be seen now to some extent, and its apparent imperfection should awaken fear, rather than lull to repose. It is as the fighting-chariot in the clouds before the destruction of Jerusalem. I cannot here enter into an argument to prove that we are subjects of moral government. I refer you to the Bible, your own consciences, the experience of man, and the history of the world.

There is a necessary connection between virtue and happiness, between vice and misery. This is admitted, and the Bible sustains the doctrine. It follows, therefore,

that Christians must be happy in consequence of their piety. Ask them if they are not so; they have peace, joy, and lively hopes. We admit they have trials and afflictions; but these are not fruits of virtue, but of sin; a reformed drunkard, for instance, suffers from previous bad habits. It is, however, common to see saints happy in poverty, sickness, persecution, and death. Why are they so, but for the law of cause and effect? Yet you see not here the whole effects of virtue; the shortness of man's life, the constitution of society, and the relation of this world to the next, prevent. Virtue on earth is militant, and cannot here enjoy the full rewards of victory. Hereafter it will be seen to be the cause of uninterrupted happiness.

Vice, in the same way, causes misery. This you admit. You see it in the drunkard—in his body, mind, family, &c. You see it in nations, working death, and you bewail it. This is true of every degree of vice; from your very nature, from God's laws and government, you must, if sinful, be uneasy, fearful, and self-accusing. You can find no real comfort, for the fountain is poisoned. Yet you see not here the whole effects of vice. Sinners are restrained by fear, by society, and cut off by death; what might we not see, were not this the case?

II. *This law will exist eternally.*

Moral government must be coeval with the existence of the Governor. It is based upon his nature. He is unchangeable and eternal, and so must be his government. In the eternal world, all disturbing forces will be removed—the mediatorial office will be resigned—and cause and effect will be immediate in their succession. *There* will the doctrine of our text be to the sinner a fearful truth!

Why should not this law exist there? Death cannot change man's moral nature, and eternity is but the continuance of his existence. Every analogy supports this

view of the subject. Admit that a long period of unconscious existence, even from death till the resurrection, may intervene between the cause and its effect; would such a delay prevent the cause from producing its legitimate effect at last? Does delay prevent sequence in this life? Sins in youth cause sufferings in age. Neither sleep nor trance prevent sequence here; why should a state of unconsciousness prevent it there? Delay cannot break the chain.

Admit a change of place, even from this to the world of spirits. But does change of place affect sequence on earth? The murderer in one city may be arrested in another far distant; the dissipated youth in this country may meet his fate in a foreign land. Morals have no national boundaries, but punishment follows the heels of the guilty. Now your journey to eternity is very short—the grave only is to be passed; and that which has crossed oceans will cross the river of death. The effects of your acts have gone before you, and will rise up to greet your entrance to heaven or hell! O remember, your own soul you are sowing—this will be your harvest ground, and eternity your harvest time!

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Act not as if in morals this law of cause and effect does not now, and will not hereafter, exist. It would be mocking God! But this will never do! He will mock by and by! Prov. i, 26. Whatsoever you sow, that shall you also reap. Be assured that every seed sown will spring up in the eternal world. It will there bring forth fruit too, even a hundred fold! How great a crop is gathered from a few grains here! Wonder not at the greatness of the crop there, nor at the duration of the harvest. Sow then, I pray you, to the Spirit, that you may reap life everlasting.

XXXVI.

WE WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN TO REIGN OVER US.—Luke xix, 14.

CHRIST, the better to accomplish his merciful purposes, often discoursed in parables. He drew them either from natural objects or passing events. The parable from which the text is taken seems to have been drawn from the circumstances of the reign of Archelaus, which were fresh in the recollection of the Jews. “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Such has been the feeling of the human heart from that time to this, and how signally has it shown itself in words and deeds! Men permit “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” to reign over them.

I propose to show you the baseness which we manifest in refusing to have Christ as our King. This appears from several considerations.

1. He alone has a right to our obedience.

1. He has for wise and benevolent ends created our bodies, souls, and spirits; of course he has a right to our constant services. He has not left us to ourselves, but has bid us live in a world under his government, to do his will, and has given us the means to do it.

2. We are entirely dependant on him for life and all its blessings. His power preserves, his goodness watches, and his bounty feeds us. Without him the universe would forget its order, lose its stability, and rush headlong into ruin.

3. The fact should never be forgotten, that when man revolted, God did not execute vengeance upon him, but gave his Son to die for him. He designed to bring him to obedience by love. We are Christ's in this exalted

sense. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price."

We belong to God in this threefold sense: we live in a world which belongs to him, we subsist on mercies which belong to him, we were redeemed by him. Yet we refuse to own him as our King! Who ever heard of such baseness?

II. *The nature of his government.*

He reigns over all as the God of providence, power, and justice, and they cannot prevent it. He maintains in the hearts of his people a reign of peace and love. Ever since man gave up his heart to Satan there has been war between all the passions; all have been rivals for empire. There has been war also against conscience and reason. There has been hatred to man and God. Thus man is an enemy to his best friend. Now God proposes to dethrone Satan from his seat in the heart, to restore conscience to its supremacy, and to fill our souls with love to himself and to our fellow-men. All his laws tend directly to this result—to individual and social happiness, to universal peace and love. Did he not show that this was his design when he strove to make peace between us and himself, by giving his Son? Was not this amazing exhibition of love intended to secure our love? Reflect, then, it is not a tyrannical and bloody government which we are resisting, but a government mild, and just, and happy. We are refusing the Prince of peace, the Father of mercies, the God of love! We are owning a liar, a murderer, an enemy, a devil! O what baseness does this exhibit!

III. *The object of his government.*

From the nature of that government we may safely infer that this is a benevolent object. But we are not left to inference. His word shows us clearly that he has in view our good. For however we may act, he is secure, happy, and glorious. "If thou sinnest, what doest thou

against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" He cannot approve our course as rebels; yet he is willing to bless us, is ready to pour upon us mercies; and hence he requires us to submit to him. What would you think of a father who should manifest such a disposition toward a rebellious son? What of that son should he still refuse obedience? What then do you think of God and man? O! He would save us from sin, from guilt, from fear, from Satan, from hell! He would reign over us now, that we may go to heaven—may share its joys, strike its harps, bear its laurels, wear its crowns, possess its thrones. Yes, that we may reign with Christ, and that for ever and ever. Rev. iii, 21, and xxii, 5. We know all this, and yet refuse Christ as our King! O the meanness of the affair!

In conclusion: While there are rewards for those who submit, there are punishments for those who refuse. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." The day of doom is coming. Remember, God is the Sovereign, and you cannot dethrone him; his dominions are universal, and you cannot flee them; his laws are strict, and you cannot evade them. Even Satan your king is in his power, and so are all his subjects. If you will not let God reign over you as a God of mercy, he will as a God of justice; if not as a God of love, he will as a God of wrath! You see the result; will you submit your hearts?

XXXVII.

IF YE BELIEVE NOT THAT I AM HE, YE SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS.
—John viii, 24.

THERE is something peculiarly impressive in the language of the text. It shows, 1. The moral condition of our race—that we are in sin, destitute of the only requisite for present and eternal happiness. 2. That Christ is our Redeemer, divinely appointed to raise us to the image and favour of God. 3. That unless we believe in him, we must die in our sins, and, by consequence, be wretched. There is no reserve here; the Saviour speaks as God, whose word is to be rejected only at the peril of the soul. Here are no flowers of speech, but the simple annunciation of a fact which will be fully understood in eternity: “*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*” Having made this declaration, Christ leaves men to do as they choose.

I. *Every man is free to believe or disbelieve the gospel.*

This might be proved by an appeal to our consciousness and actions, and also by the Bible, which addresses us as free agents. Other proof may, however, be adduced.

1. We are so constituted that when facts are substantiated by a certain amount of evidence, we cannot disbelieve them without doing violence to our nature. Thus we believe in certain first truths; as, “Two quantities, each of which is equal to a third, are equal to another.” “The whole is greater than its part.” “The whole is equal to the sum of all its parts,” &c.—These cannot be made clearer by reasoning; they are self-evident. Mathematical reasoning is based on them; if, therefore, in the demonstration of a mathematical problem the successive steps be correct, we must believe the conclusion.

So we believe in the evidence of our senses. Whenever we are deceived by them, it is owing either to their imperfection, or to our drawing a wrong conclusion from their testimony. So also we believe in the testimony of our fellow-men, though they sometimes deceive us. In some cases, however, there is no room for doubt; as in the proof of the resurrection of Christ. Here the witnesses had every means of knowing the fact—they could not be deceived—they did not lie—they had no motive to lie. Succeeding events corroborate their testimony; as the descent of the Holy Ghost, the gift of tongues, the miracles wrought by the apostles, and the general belief. Now when such evidence is before us, we must believe, or do violence to our nature. But on the other hand consider,

2. We have the power to exclude evidence, and to weaken its force. We may shut out the light which is afforded us by nature, conscience, the Spirit, and revelation. Many do this, but let them not complain of the consequences. We may weaken the force of evidence by examining it with prejudice, with a wish not to be convinced, or to prove it false. We may do so by paying more attention to objections than to their answers, by looking more on one side than on the other, or by sophistry. This last blunts the mind till we cannot distinguish truth from error; we often see that such is the effect. Now in view of these two considerations you perceive that we are free to believe or disbelieve the gospel.

II. *Every man is free to act according to his belief.*

This will be admitted by most persons, and may be proved by an appeal to facts. It would be useless to dwell on it were it not, 1. That many claim to be believers who are not Christians, and say they cannot be. 2. That the Bible classes all such as unbelievers. Mere intellectual belief is not that required in the text; it has no

saving efficacy; "*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*" The Bible takes it for granted that men will be reasonable in regard to religion, as well as in regard to other subjects; that is, will act according to their convictions, live according to their belief. Hence the command, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." But sin has rendered our actions at variance with our convictions and belief, and men thus exhibit a strange spectacle of folly to all worlds.

In the present state, then, there is this great obstacle to men's acting according to their belief in religious matters; namely, their wills and affections do not move as reason, conscience, and God dictate. Now to overcome this obstacle, and to make us free, 1. God has set before us motives which appeal to our feelings as well as reason; such as heaven and hell. 2. He has proffered us divine aid to change our wills and affections. To exercise faith in Christ, we have every inducement which time and eternity can offer—every facility which the Almighty Spirit can afford. Therefore you may be a believer or an unbeliever, a Christian or a sinner, saved or lost. You are maker of your own destiny!

III. *We are approaching the period when we must finally decide on the course which we will take.*

As experience proves, so might we have expected, if a man put himself in the light it will shine upon him. As he investigates, evidence will increase till it become sufficient for full belief. There is a period when it will be brightest—when he will decide. So, on the other hand, if he ridicule and cavil, the light of evidence will withdraw, and leave the mind at last in total darkness. This principle applies especially to investigations of the truths of the gospel. The gospel is the scheme which God has devised for man's moral and spiritual improvement; and he has promised that a constant endeavour to learn the

truth shall be followed by open vision, while proud self-confidence shall end in sorrow. John vii, 17; Isa. l, 11. This principle was illustrated in the case of the Jews when Christ spread evidence before them. They were astonished at his doctrine, they marvelled at his miracles, besought him to depart from them, and finally likened him to Beelzebub. Then Christ uttered that fearful sentence, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Matt. vii, 28; viii, 27, 34; xii, 24-32; Mark iii, 29. Then did they pass their crisis, and their eternal destiny was sealed! Then might their guardian angels have left them to their doom!

So if we would secure personal salvation, this principle remains in force. As motives are regarded, they become more powerful and overwhelming; as the Spirit is cherished, his influence becomes more softening, till the heart is changed. On the other hand, when fully convinced, the longer we defer yielding to conviction, the less hope is there that we will yield. Motives disregarded become less moving; incentives to duty unheeded become less frequent and less powerful; the Spirit grieved and resisted becomes less convincing, until we reach the fearful point when he leaves us for ever!

In conclusion, I ask you if these truths have not, at times, deeply affected you? I know they have! Will you wonder that I feel anxious for you when I see you free to believe or disbelieve the gospel, free to act according to your belief, and approaching the period when you must finally decide on the course which you will take? when I reflect that every sermon I preach brings you nearer this period? If a small matter were at stake—if it were the world—I would not weep. But how can I help weeping when heaven itself is to be gained or lost? If your unbelief could alter the case, I would not weep;

but it cannot. "*If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*" God's word cannot fail. If you die unbelievers, eternity will open your eyes! You will then, like devils, "*believe and tremble*"—but not like mourning penitents, believe and be saved. O! do not trifle any longer, but come to Christ.

XXXVIII.

IF THOU BE WISE, THOU SHALT BE WISE FOR THYSELF: BUT IF THOU SCORNEST, THOU ALONE SHALT BEAR IT.—PROV. ix, 12.

IN this and the preceding chapter the Saviour is beautifully represented as Wisdom, soliciting the attention and asking the affections of men. In language of unsurpassed beauty he shows his claims to our regard, and the inducements to receive him. In the text you see that he recognises but two classes of men. This may seem severe indeed. Are not those who respect religion and support its ordinances worthy to be called friends of Christ? Him they disobey, neglect, and reject. Surely, then, they scorn him.

I. *Every man is responsible for his opinions and actions.*

Opinions, in all reasonable men, are the basis of actions; hence the necessity of their correctness. Hence the force of the precepts of the Bible, "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." I make these remarks in view of the sentiment, "It is no matter what a man believes, provided he be sincere."

According to the Bible, our means of knowledge, and our power of acting in accordance with that knowledge,

are the basis and measure of our responsibility. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." Also Rom. ii, 14, 15. I said *means* of knowledge, for one may choose ignorance, as many do; but in the divine, as in human governments, ignorance of the law does not exculpate the transgressor. Our responsibility is proportioned to them. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." The trafficker in rum, for instance, is more guilty now than twenty years ago, because he has more knowledge.

We have knowledge in a high degree, and are proportionally responsible. Every sermon we hear increases this responsibility.

The Bible takes it for granted that we have power to act according to our knowledge. Our consciousness proves it.

From these principles, so hastily glanced at, you see the sophistry and folly of those who claim to be irresponsible on account of,

1. Early education, associates, &c. What if you were wrongly educated? What if your associates led you astray? The right way is opened before you. You have evidence and motive sufficient to bring you right; and, if lost, it will be, not because you were brought up wrong, but because you would not be set right.

2. The inconsistencies of professors of religion. I admit and lament both inconsistencies and inaction; they are stumbling-blocks; but you are not forced to stumble over them into hell. You may be saved in spite of them, if you will. It seems to be a too common opinion that

ministers and Christians are responsible for the salvation of sinners, in such a sense as to relieve the latter of *their* responsibility. This is a wrong interpretation of Scripture. Even Ezekiel does not intimate that they who die in their iniquity on account of our unfaithfulness will not themselves be held responsible; but the contrary is plain from his very words: "That *wicked* man shall die in *his* iniquity." We are required to use all the means of doing good according to our ability; *you* to make them effectual to the salvation of your souls. This is the broad ground on which you and I must stand or fall at the judgment. God grant it may there appear that I have faithfully done my part—that you have done yours.

II. *Every man is himself the greatest gainer or loser by his actions.*

It is on this account that the appeals and motives of the Bible are so overwhelming. It prescribes no duty, enforces no command, merely for the sake of others, but for our own good. Hence virtue is its own reward, vice its own punishment. The position may be proved,

1. By an appeal to facts. The virtuous man is a blessing to himself, to his family, friends, and society. Follow him in all the relations of life, and read the proof in letters bright as heaven. No one can tell the happiness which he may have caused, the woe he may have prevented; and the effects may extend through all time and eternity. When the righteous man is removed, you see and feel the darkness. Yet he himself is the greatest gainer, in the happiness of his family and friends—the welfare of the church and of society—the smiles of conscience, and the approval of God. What is the happiness of all whom he has benefited compared with the feeling, "I have done my duty, I have been the instrument of it all?"

So, in all these relations, the vicious man is a curse. No one can tell what good he has prevented, what evil he

has caused ; and the results may be eternal. Yet he is the greatest loser. His victims may be innocent, and therefore happy. But the guilt is his, and this gives poignancy to every pang of remorse and fear.

2. By revelation. The holy man secures for himself heaven and all its inconceivable glories. There his capacities, ever enlarging, will be ever filled with happiness. There are no points of elevation or of bliss which he may not reach. He who was instrumental in his salvation may be there also ; but he will deprive him of none of his joys, as a reward for his instrumentality. That reward will be ample in seeing the happiness of the convert. He will be a star in his crown which, while it addeth to its lustre, loseth none of its own glory ; as Venus adds to the beauty of our system, but is no less beautiful herself.

So the wicked will reap death and hell ; and their condition will be the reverse of that of the good in all respects. There will be no transfer of consequences to agents and abettors ; they were accessories, we principals. God will see that wicked men and devils are fully punished for the interest which they have taken, and the aid which they have afforded in our destruction ; but the severity of their punishment will not lighten ours. It will be no alleviation to us to see them suffer. Imagine, for a moment, an ungodly priest and his lost hearers in a world of wo ! Hear their mutual reproaches and increasing groans ! Ah ! they lessen not each other's miseries, but constantly and for ever augment them.

Such is the awful responsibility under which we are all acting. We are exerting an influence for good or for evil, which may be felt through all time. After time we shall see its effects in eternity. At the judgment "every one of us shall give account of himself to God," and in its decisions upon our acts we shall be ourselves the

greatest gainers or losers. Think not that I have exaggerated the case. Think not to shuffle off responsibility. You cannot do it, while Jehovah sits upon his throne. Think not of favouritism on account of your peculiar lot; God shows none. Dream not of escape from consequences; God knows none.

XXXIX.

SURELY THOU WILT SLAY THE WICKED, O GOD.—Psalm cxxxix, 19.

HOLY men in all ages have had an unshaken confidence in the doctrine of the final punishment of the wicked. Hence they speak of this punishment as absolutely certain. They bring it to view as the great inducement to incline us to virtue. Now there is most assuredly some ground for this confidence, tenable or untenable; and inasmuch as we are deeply interested, it becomes us to examine it thoroughly. I ask you to bring to this examination not your desires and prejudices, but the Bible, and the eternal principles of moral government. Consider, then, that to punish the wicked God is pledged,

I. *To his own nature.*

God is infinitely holy; that is, such is his nature that he necessarily and supremely loves right, and hates wrong. "Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?" Hence this love and hatred are not arbitrary passions, but essential perfections. Take them from him, and you rob him of all that renders him lovely or glorious as God. Now, no perfection of Deity can be dormant, but must be active; that is, God must manifest his love and hatred to their appropriate objects. All his word and works declare that he does so; he smiles on angels, frowns on devils. Do you ask, in view of this, why he does not now show

his hatred to sin as fearfully as he ever will? Most fearfully did he show it in the atonement made by Christ. In consequence of that atonement and of the Saviour's intercession, mercy now rules, and God's anger does not now fall upon you. But these merciful provisions are for a season only, and when it shall have ended, no daysman will be found. Holiness requires that God should be just to himself as well as to man. Hence the least God can do with the finally impenitent is to banish them from his presence; else he would show complacency to that which he supremely hates. On the same principle it is due from a king to himself to banish from his court a traitor. But under God's moral government, banishment must be eternal despair. In eternity, to be out of heaven is to be in hell!

II. *To his Son.*

In Christ's sufferings, love of holiness and hatred of sin were awfully shown. At the fall, God had determined that man must die; this determination was made, not in anger, but from the nature of the case; that is, man had become unholy. So great was the Saviour's love of holiness and of man, that he consented to die that man might become holy, and consequently happy. Remember that the object of the atonement was to promote holiness; hence faith is the condition, as no man can exercise faith without becoming more or less holy. Christ did not die to bring us to heaven without holiness; he could not from his nature do so. He meant to leave in eternal misery all who would not be made holy. He assigned the conditions of salvation, and the time in which we may comply with them. The Father gave his Son to die as the only measure which should be adopted, and hence the sacrifice was offered. Study the Bible, and you will see it to be so. Hence God stands pledged to his Son to see this plan fully carried out. If there be failure or deviation,

the Son may say that his sufferings were unjust and useless—that God looks with allowance on that in man, on which he frowned when it was borne by himself in his own body on the tree. Will eternity see God unholy? At variance with his only Son!

III. *To fallen angels.*

That some angels have fallen has been revealed, not to gratify our curiosity, but probably to show us the extent and nature of God's moral government, viz., it reaches to heaven;—sin produces misery. God “spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.” Why? Because they became unholy. Hence he is pledged to them to manifest his anger against all his subjects who sin. Fallen angels do not now complain of their doom. Matt. viii, 29; Mark v, 7. On the principles of moral government, they know that it is right and inevitable. Let the finally wicked escape, and what cries of tyranny, injustice, and partiality, would they utter! But they know there is no escape, else they would not tempt us; they do it to ruin us, for “misery loves company.” God must either release them, or punish us if we remain impenitent.

IV. *To our world.*

God has shown his disapprobation of sin at divers times, and in various ways, in this world's history. The marks of his judgments are incorporated in the structure of the earth. Now he must do one of two things. He must either change his government, which is immutable, or bring it finally and equally to bear on all. The latter is required of a good and holy governor. If he punish sin in one individual, so he should in all; if one sin, every sin. If he pardon, it must be by an impartial rule. Were he to do otherwise, his government would be but caprice and tyranny. But God is holy. Were he not so, how would the antediluvians, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and others who have suffered signal judg-

ments, complain! God stands committed to them to punish those who neglect salvation; for he has made "them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly," 2 Peter ii, 5, 6.

But there is a principle within us which points to judgment, and threatens punishment. The ignorant and the learned, the heathen and the Christian, know its power, and show it in their sacrifices and in their lives. It is the voice of God, the finger of the Almighty. It warns us, and significantly points out our danger. Yet all this is solemn mockery, if there be not something awful beyond the grave—if the whispers of conscience be not a faint resemblance to the thunders of judgment. You carry in your breast to judgment the pledge of its impartiality!

Such are the views which the Bible authorizes us to take of this solemn subject. If ye doubt, examine. Look at it in its full extent, and how can you avoid seeing our own and all worlds as existing under one great government? They are planets of the same system which spans the universe; bound together by the great law of moral government, even as they are by that of attraction. They are equally dependant on the latter for physical existence, and on the former for moral. Suspension or abrogation in either case is destruction!

XL.

IF WE BELIEVE NOT, YET HE ABIDETH FAITHFUL: HE CANNOT DENY HIMSELF.—2 Tim. ii, 13.

THE offers of salvation are freely made to us all. The condition on which they are made is one which can be complied with by all men, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free. God has, however, left us the power to

do as we wish. If we refuse to comply with the condition, "yet he abideth faithful;" how can we escape? God is pledged to himself, to his universe, to punish us; and "he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." This part of our subject we have discussed. Let us now show our reasons for believing he will fulfil his word. We adduce,

I. *His omniscience.*

God is the only being who knows the end from the beginning. When he instituted his moral government he foresaw, as clearly as if they were all present before his eyes, its effects on all beings and all worlds. Reasons of infinite wisdom, holiness, and love prompted him to constitute it as he did. Its prime law, holiness, (obedience to which produces happiness, and its violation, misery,) did not originate in caprice, but in the very nature of things. Now the effects of this government God foresaw would be such as his attributes would approve—such as would promote the holiness and happiness of the universe. He then gave the wheel the first impulse of eternal motion!

Practical results have followed. His laws have been violated, and the consequences have followed. "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." For thousands of years God has witnessed their sufferings, (Job xxvi, 6,) the legitimate effects of the violation of his laws; yet they are unrelieved, and will be for ever. If there was to be a change, there would have been one long ago. If the results had disappointed or displeased him, change would have taken place. But the wheel will never stop, or it would never have moved!

II. *His omnipotence.*

We have seen that God foresaw all the effects of his

government, and approved them. No repenting emotion has ever agitated his bosom. Has he power, then, to bring to pass what he approves? Now God alone is independent;—his power is self-derived. He is above the control of all beings and all events. Whatever may transpire will not transpire without his permission. All resources are his. “He spake, and it was done;” and by a word will the earth be dissolved. All beings are his servants—even devils are subject to him. How easy, then, will it be for him to execute his laws;—the elements may be his messengers. Man is weak, having so much power only as is derived from him. “He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” “If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.”

III. *His immutability.*

He approves of all these effects now, you say, but will he for ever? May he not change? If he change, it will not be from caprice, for he is wise and holy. Will there be any new reasons to influence him? Nay, for he is infinite in knowledge and wisdom, and ever was. Infinity knows neither diminution nor increase. But God has revealed himself as unchangeable. “*I am the LORD, I change not.*” He is as he is by the nature of himself, and for the same reason must so remain for ever. Here I have arrived at first truths, and can go no further. Reason must here lean on the Bible, and cease to reach beyond it. But is it said that God changed his purposes in regard to the inhabitants of Nineveh? Such an instance but proves his immutability of principle and of purpose. Change was in *them*, not in him. While they were sinning, he was angry; when they repented, or changed, his

anger ceased. But he has ordered that *we* cannot thus change in eternity.

The acts of God prove his immutability. He has shown his immutable love of holiness, 1. When, to human view, it seemed against his interest. As in the deluge; would it not defeat the design of the creation? Yet it swept all the dwellers upon earth, save one family, into the fathomless ocean of despair! As in the captivity of the Jews, &c. 2. When it seemed opposed to every feeling of affection. As in the judgments with which he visited the Jews. What love he had for that people—how he fostered and blessed them! “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?” was the language of his love. Yet they were sorely punished, and many of them were lost!

O, how was God’s immutable love of holiness displayed in the sufferings of Christ! How did he love him—what words can express! Yet when the Saviour bore our sins, how did the Father “bruise him!” He was “smitten of God, and afflicted.” How awful were his sufferings, none but God can tell! Here was the conflict, but love of holiness was unshaken! If God could have changed, that moment was the time. But the hour has passed! The Son of God hath suffered! Who in after time will hope to escape? He that spared not his own Son when he bore *our* sins, will not spare us if guilty. Can it be thought he will now change for us—us so mean—us so bountifully provided with a Saviour—so often urged to accept that Saviour? O no! The thought is delusive—banish it for ever. His pledge will be redeemed!

And now go not away and call this an idle theory. It is the great theory of eternal life and death; it is based

upon the Bible. It may be trifled with, but it cannot, I think, be gainsaid. I have studied hard to present this subject before you as it really is, and have for weeks reflected upon it. These principles of revelation and moral government have not been spread out for the purpose of mental exercise and gratification, but to save the soul. Be not content with having listened to them, but reflect—pray. Error here will ruin you for ever! If I were a lecturer I would call myself repaid for my labour by your attention; but O! my station is more awful. Nothing but your acceptance of the offers of life and salvation can satisfy my desires. O that I could now persuade you! With the full belief of the solemn truths which I have declared, I leave you, “commending you to God, and to the word of his grace.”

XLI.

HOW OFT IS THE CANDLE OF THE WICKED PUT OUT?—Job xxi, 17.

THE patriarch proposed this question with unusual anxiety. He seems to have expected that the answer it would extort would lead his friends to greater mildness in the review of the judgment they had passed on him. The idea conveyed is, that the wicked are seldom punished in this life, but are reserved to a future day. Job's friends believed him wicked because distressed, and exhorted him to repent. The ground of their argument was a moral government. He defended himself by showing the irregularity of that government in its present application to saint and sinner. Men are not here rewarded or punished according to their virtue or vice, and therefore external prosperity and the reverse are not true indications of virtue or of vice.

I. *Let us consider this irregularity.*

It is plain to you all that God governs the world by general laws; this is absolutely necessary. He has no general law to reward or punish by outward things, except that of the necessary operation of virtue and vice to produce happiness, and the reverse. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Hence, in a qualified sense, the sentiment, "All things come alike to all," &c., (Eccles. ix, 2, 3,) is true. The saint and sinner share alike in misfortune, poverty, diseases, accidents, and death. Sometimes the sinner appears to have the advantage, as in Psal. lxxiii. You are to remember, however, this does not decide their relative happiness, and therefore does not militate against virtue; a saint in rags is happier than a sinner on the throne. True, it is a general law of God to provide for his children; (Psalms xxxvii and xci;) but he does so by human means. It is also a general law that "the years of the wicked shall be shortened;" but their end is brought about by natural causes. Man, not God, brings death on himself, as in the case of the drunkard; his candle *burns out*. The instances are rare in which God, by the breath of his anger, puts out the candle of the wicked. Sometimes he does so, as in the cases of "Korah, and all his company," Ananias and Sapphira, as if to impress upon the world the truth that there is a moral government, lest they should forget it in its irregularity, or trifle with its apparent laxity. Generally, however, he lets the blasphemer live to curse, nor takes the forfeiture at the swearer's hand.

The good are also sometimes brought to a premature grave. Thus was it with Josiah, that he might not see the evil which was to come upon Judah. "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come." Some of us this day know full well that the good man often dies in the

prime of his days, and in the strength of his wisdom. When the prospect of usefulness is to human view most flattering; when hope most doatingly fastens itself upon its object; when we are looking forward through the long vista of coming years, suddenly we hear the rattling of the wheels, and in sorrowful surprise are compelled to cry out, "My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." But no sooner have we uttered the words than the chariot is gone; and, like the prophet on the plains of Jordan, we are left alone to rend our garments and to weep.

II. *This irregularity shall not always exist.*

Hence Eccles. viii, 12, 13; Isaiah iii, 10, 11. Ye who believe the Bible will not demur at this position, for God hath told you of a judgment, of its universality, and its relation to earthly deeds. But there is another process of proof quite convincing. Let us glance at it for a moment.

1. The causes of this irregularity are manifestly limited to a definite time. There are good reasons for the present mode of administration. We can see some of them. Let us look at two.

Mercy is the disturbing force; a new power has been added to it by the atonement. It is necessary it should rule, that man may have a probation; justice would cut him down. Its pre-eminence is temporary, for probation is limited; it will end with the Mediatorial office, and that Christ will soon resign.

Were men to see all the legitimate effects of virtue and vice, (and they would, were there no irregularity,) there would be no opportunity for trial—no strong contending forces—no occasion for the exercise of faith. Yet these are necessary, as preparative for heaven. Hence the reason of the concealment of "the spirit-world." But the reason for faith and trial will cease, when man's

character shall have been completed, and his doom fixed.

2. The instinctive feelings of the soul in witnessing the sins of others, and in reflecting on our own, show that this state of things shall not always continue. You cannot look upon any act of cruelty or oppression which goes unpunished here, without wishing for a future judgment, and rejoicing that there is one. We cannot think of our own sins but as acts of rebellion and treason, which will be punished for the sake of the example at least. We know and feel that they are, by no means, trifles. Sin has given us an importance, and the whole universe is deeply interested in our case.

3. The very fact that the candle of *some* is put out is irrefutable proof. It shows that God has respect to sin in some, and, to be impartial, as you feel that he is, must notice it in all—must notice every sin in all—that there may be no ground of complaint. Those whose fate is recorded in Luke xiii, 1-5, were not, perhaps, greater sinners than we. They might have offered many extenuating pleas which we cannot; and if you judge of the greatness of their sins by the calamities which came upon them, it may be said, that these were accidental, or rather contingent. “Do ye not know that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.”

This subject should have a practical effect upon us all. It should reconcile saints to the outward ills of life; you see they are necessary to God’s plan, and to the good of his universe. Why, then, should you indulge one murmuring thought?

“Ye good distress’d!

Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
Beneath life’s pressure, yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem’d evil, is no more.”

It should open the eyes of the thoughtless :—

“Ye vainly wise ! ye blind presumptuous ! now,
 Confounded in the dust, adore that Power
 And Wisdom oft arraign’d.”

Can you be secure ? Your candle may soon be put out ; it may now dazzle you and its beholders, but God may breathe upon it, and where is it ? Be not blinded by its glare. The blackness of darkness is before you ! Can you trifle ? Will you sport ? O, revolve this subject in your minds, and prepare for that day when “*we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*”

XLII.*

HOW SHALL I GIVE THEE UP ?—Hosca xi, 8.

GOD has always manifested a tender solicitude for the welfare of the human race. Though we have marred his image, and strayed widely from him, he has not given us over. He follows us with entreaties ; and when all efforts have proved unavailing—when we stand on the precipice, and mercy must release its grasp, it does so with grief. “*How shall I give thee up ?*” If God were dependant in any sense on us, it would not be strange ; but as it is not so, and as in the result he cannot be affected by our character or acts, it is strange. And why does his anxiety for our salvation so far exceed our own ?

* This sermon was preached in Broomfield-street church a few weeks before the author’s death. It is the last that he prepared for the pulpit, and the last that he preached.—ED.

I. *He knows far better than we the nature and value of the soul.*

We judge of these by the qualities which the soul exhibits, and by the knowledge which God hath revealed to us. We see the mind controlling matter, and making it subservient to its purposes—investigating nature, and discovering its secrets—swaying assemblies, and governing nations. We see it coming to results almost instantaneously, and bursting forth in every form of beauty and grandeur. When we compare these qualities with those of matter, we see that the soul is worth all things material. That which thinks and reasons must be more valuable than clay. And then we know from revelation that it is immortal—that it shall outlive the body—the world—and live for ever!

But the Creator knows these things far better than we. He formed the soul after the model of his own. He knows the effects which it can produce, and the extent to which it can be enlarged eternally. You see it weighed down by bodily infirmities, and unable to effect more because its instruments are weak or broken; he sees it unshackled and complete in all its powers. You witness it tainted and biased by sin; he sees it pure and shining in its renewal. You see it when it has but commenced its course, and soon its instruments are powerless, and it has itself departed; he beholds it when it has progressed in the development of its powers, beyond all time. You try to learn its duration by the lapse of ages, and get but an overpowering glimpse; he looks on its being as commensurate with his own, and he inhabiteth eternity. O! such is the difference in knowledge between us and him.

II. *He knows far better than we the nature of our future state of existence.*

It is the law of his throne, as unchangeable as himself, that the wicked “shall go away into everlasting punish-

—there may we renew our acquaintance, there strike our harps, there wear our crowns ! There may we meet to part no more. Finally, beloved, one and all, while “ I take you to record this day,” as I most conscientiously feel that I can, “ that I am pure from the blood of all”—with the warmest wishes for your prosperity as individuals, as a society, and as a church, and with fervent prayers for your eternal salvation—I bid you a kind and affectionate farewell, “ commending you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE ODEON, BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 9, 1838,
BEFORE AN ASSOCIATION OF SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.*

THE great law of the universe is progression. In obedience to it every thing moves on, either in an increasing or decreasing series. The solid granite gradually crumbles into dust. The tall oak of the forest is first a tender shoot, then a green sapling, till at last, under the genial influence of warmth and moisture, it becomes stately in its maturity ; and, if permitted to remain unmolested, it as gradually decays, to afford nourishment to others. So the human body is first seen in all the helplessness of infancy, then in the freshness and beauty of youth, then in the full strength of manhood ; till age steals on apace, impairing its beauty, wasting its freshness, and destroying its strength, till in the grave, man’s second cradle, it turns again to dust. Memory, imagination, judgment, and reason have also their infancy and youth, and, if properly

* This lecture is one of a course which was delivered at the Odeon by clergymen of different denominations.—ED.

cultivated, reach not only a definite point of perfection, but progress in strength so long as man can witness their manifestations through the unimpaired bodily organs. And when the soul leaves the body, if disciplined in virtue, it progresses in knowledge to all eternity. The Bible assures us that this same law exists in the moral, as in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and intellectual world.

In all ages of the world the same law has been manifest in those combinations of individuals which we call societies. By consulting the page of history we find that society in its infancy is very different from society in its manhood. Men seem to have herded together, in the early ages, by a sort of instinct, for mutual protection and comfort. Their physical wants soon became fewer than the means of supply. Hence moments of leisure were found, which, by the natural contact of mind with mind, were by degrees devoted to mental improvement. Civilization, as a necessary consequence, followed, and kept pace with the progress of mental cultivation, and daily originated new wants, not solely of a physical, but principally of an intellectual nature. Science and art followed in the track of civilization, to supply these daily increasing wants.

The histories of Greece and Rome teach us that society may progress in a decreasing series; that unless the moral powers be expanded in unison with the intellectual, society not only cannot advance in improvement beyond a certain fixed point, but also cannot long remain at that point. It must descend, and rapidly too, the acclivity which it has been long and laboriously climbing. Thus was it with those proud nations. For a time they successfully cultivated the mind, and made rapid and unprecedented advancement in the arts and sciences; but they left the heart untouched. Hence their passions increased with the increasing means of gratification which science

evident from one consideration, viz.: 'The progress of society daily brings to light hitherto undiscovered principles, and reveals new facts, which have an important bearing upon the happiness of man in all his varied circumstances and multiplied relations. These discoveries, and their application to human wants, constitute the progress of society.'

As this part of our subject is often brought before you in the form of lectures on education, &c., we will confine our remarks to the second part of our definition. And that you may clearly see why the present state of society renders it our duty to improve and discipline our intellectual faculties, so as to render our knowledge of principles and facts most serviceable to ourselves and others, I propose to consider, 1. The characteristics of that style of speaking and writing which greatly affects the public mind; and 2. The essential requisites for its possession.

I. *The characteristics of that style of speaking and writing which greatly affects the public mind.*

It seems to be the intention of Providence that mind should act upon mind, and thus produce all the changes which we witness in the intellectual and moral world. History teaches us that truth has frequently been embraced, and error promulgated, not so much on account of the intrinsic excellences of the former, or the supposed merits of the latter, as by the personal influence of their respective advocates and abettors. Thus one man has often held in his hand the destinies of nations. Every individual should, however, exert an influence exactly in proportion to his talents and merit; and when an equal system of education shall prevail, influence will be thus graduated. Every young man, whether engaged in mechanical or professional business, should therefore prepare himself to exert his full amount of influence, and thus contribute to bring about such a state of society. It will be no small honour even to begin a work which,

when fully accomplished, will tend to make every man wise and good.

If we carefully examine the history of the past, I think we shall find that, as some ages of the world have been distinguished for licentiousness, tumults, and revolutions, so some have been remarkable for peculiar modes of thinking, and peculiar modes of expression.

The present is an *age of intensity*. By this I mean an age distinguished not only for that insatiable desire for wealth which has given rise to the ten thousand new schemes daily held up for our approval, and to the nameless improvements of the present day; but also an age in which principles are pushed to their extremes, and embodied in the strongest language. Excitement seems to be the goddess which reigns over every subject that appeals to the interests, the sympathies, and the conscience of man. The age of cool and dispassionate thinking and speaking seems to have passed away; so that we may well inquire if moderation has not been dethroned from the hearts of men. Whether public men have produced this state of things, or whether the public have forced them to pursue this course, is an interesting question. Be this as it may, it is evident that public men, of whatever profession, must be distinguished, either for the strength or for the beauty of their thoughts and expressions, if they would exert a deep and wide-spread influence.

For proof of this position let us look at the periodicals of the age. And here we must pass over those which are the official organs of parties and sects, as it is manifest that these would, at all events, be sustained by their respective adherents. Yet of these it may safely be affirmed, that those which are conducted by men of the above-mentioned character are the most popular, and secure the greatest amount of patronage. No skilful

politician would place in the editorial chair a man not fully qualified, by intellectual acumen, to encounter these stormy times.

But why are such periodicals as the *Knickerbocker* and *Blackwood's Magazine* so popular? It is because they contain much which gratifies the taste. They abound in beautiful poetry, fine stories, and enchanting romance. The genius of beauty and poetry reigns there to captivate the reader. Have you never observed the effect which a well-written tale has produced upon society—not only upon the young and sentimental, but also upon the old and the sober-minded—and that, too, when the incidents of the story were not remarkable, and would, if stripped of their fairy dress, have passed unnoticed? The art of the writer, and the beauty of his expressions, attracted the attention, and thus opened unconsciously the gushing fountains of sensibility.

Works of fiction are likewise a criterion by which we may estimate the state of the public mind. These are more generally read than any other class of writings, notwithstanding the innumerable evils of which they are frequently the cause, and for which their authors must be held responsible. The changes in their style show the change of taste in the gay and fashionable, yea, even in the low and humble walks of life; for no door has yet been found too low to admit an armed knight or a courtly queen.

The style of fictitious writings has undergone a thorough revolution during the last century. Novels of the older class were distinguished for their romantic, visionary stories; for extravagant recitals of foolish dreams; for wonderful descriptions of fairies, ghosts, and fiends; for miraculous accounts of astrology and necromancy; and, in general, for vulgarity and licentiousness. The story attracted the attention and excited the passions of the

reader, while the language in which it was told, and the figures with which it was adorned, had no power to captivate the mind or charm the imagination. Novels of the present day are generally distinguished, not for the mysteriousness of their heroes and heroines, nor for the magic of the plot, but for their historical sketches; for the beauty of their language, and the elegance of their imagery; for their delineations of human character, and for their bold and spirit-stirring descriptions of the dark workings of human passion. The lover and his idol-mistress do indeed figure conspicuously, but their appearance is not so disgusting as it once was, nor so painfully frequent.

Now, either novelists themselves have wrought this great change in the taste of society, or society has compelled the novelist to act in accordance with its views. Whatever may have produced the change, it is undeniable that it exists. Librarians will tell us that Scott, Cooper, and Bulwer, are incessantly demanded, while Smollett, Fielding, and others of the older class, stand untouched and dusty upon their shelves.

Why are Annuals, Souvenirs, and the whole train of new-year periodicals, so popular? Why are the works of Mrs. Hemans and others so dear to the young and the fair? Not merely because they are finely embossed and richly gilded, but because of the style in which they are written. That part of the community that desire light reading seek those authors who are distinguished for the beauty of their productions. They go in quest of beauty as the bee goes in quest of honey. Wherever they find a flower, they cull it. That author, therefore, who can furnish the sweetest flowers will be most courted and most admired: and if he derive them from the great source of uncreated beauty, he may lead his readers to seek flowers that "thornless grow" in the green pastures, and beside the still waters of the "better land."

tem of divinity which he so boldly advocated, but to his riding gloriously upon the whirlwind, and careering triumphantly upon the storm.

If we confine our observations to that part of the community with which we are more conversant, making due allowance for diversity of natural talent, we must admit that those ministers who possess the highest mental acquirements, united with the deepest piety, are the most efficient labourers in the moral vineyard. We may go into the church, beholding its laymen engaged in its sabbath schools and in its meetings of social worship, and of them most confidently make the same assertion.

In fine, the community expect either beauty and elegance, or force and sublimity, in all the productions of professional men, and they will rest satisfied with nothing short of this. They require of every individual who desires to influence them, whatever may be his station in life, the same character, in kind, which they require of public men. The degree in which he must possess it they willingly graduate by the facilities for improvement which he has enjoyed. The rising generation are coming upon the theatre of action to carry these requisitions still further, and shall we not prepare ourselves to guide them in the paths of truth and virtue, so that when we in our turn retire behind the scenes, the wise and good may take our places? How can we prepare ourselves but by grasping with a firm and steady hand these reins of influence?

If such, then, be the demands of the age, and if, in the possession of such characteristics as I have named, lies the secret of the success of those who powerfully influence society, it surely is important for us to consider,

II. *The essential requisites for the possession of this style.*

Every man is bound to exert his whole influence in favour of truth and virtue. He who refuses to avail him-

self of all the means which are placed within his reach, by which he may increase his influence, is wanting in the discharge of his duty to man and God. True, toil and sacrifice may be the price by which augmented influence must be purchased ; but who that loves his country, who that prizes Jerusalem above his chief joy, will hesitate for a moment to pay it ?

Let me not, however, be understood to convey the idea that all may arrive at the same eminence, or exert the same amount of influence, even though they may devote the same amount of time to intellectual improvement. Something must doubtless be imputed to the account of natural talent, of which there is a great diversity. We behold this diversity in men of every age and nation. Some, however, who are placed under the most favourable circumstances for intellectual improvement rise not to an eminence half so high as that to which others rise who are placed under unfavourable circumstances. The self-taught man, who struggles with poverty, and the envy of an envious world, often surpasses, in every branch of literature and science, him who has been favoured with all the advantages of the best-endowed and best-regulated university. The difference in intellect which we witness among men may not, therefore, be owing so much to diversity of natural talent, as to the degree to which that talent has been cultivated.

Hence also it is proper to remark, that the facilities for intellectual improvement with which men are favoured are very dissimilar. One has wealth and health, another poverty and sickness. Even in our own New-England, the most highly-favoured portion of the earth, some degree of wealth is necessary to obtain instruction in the higher departments of knowledge, so that the children of the rich possess many advantages over those of the poor.

On examination, I am inclined to believe that there is

a greater difference in the facilities for improvement with which men are favoured, than in the natural talent with which they are endowed. And as God in his wisdom has suffered these differences to exist, so will he wisely adjust our separate accounts, and reward every one according to his works, when he shall

“Make up the last reck’ning ’twixt heaven and earth.”

The first requisite to be considered for the possession of such a style as is adapted to the wants of the age, is *knowledge of human nature*. If an individual wishes to produce a change in any given substance, he must first be well acquainted with its nature. Thus if a chemist would labour successfully in his laboratory, he must be well acquainted with the nature of the substances which he has collected together. To influence men is to sway them by means of their understanding, imagination, or passions; and hence the necessity of obtaining a knowledge of these faculties and passions, and of the laws by which they are governed. In consequence of this knowledge, writers and speakers often surprise us by their correct delineations of human character, and their vivid representations of human feelings. Those who desire to influence men generally endeavour to acquire this knowledge, and therefore pay strict attention to the exhibition of human character, under all the varied circumstances in which men are placed. They behold with interest the actions of the infant, watch the schemes of youth, and scrutinize the riper plans of manhood. To acquire this knowledge, some have even disguised themselves, and thus, availing themselves of the advantages which concealment affords, have entered the secret chambers of man’s soul, when its doors have been incautiously opened.

A part of the advantage derived from history consists in the knowledge of human nature which it conveys.

History is a broad development of the human heart. It reveals the actions of men under almost all possible circumstances, and shows us the motives which have apparently actuated them in the pursuit of their various objects. It exhibits the influence which circumstances, great and trivial, have had upon their plans and actions, and shows the great effects which artful men and master spirits have ever produced upon the world. It plainly illustrates and confirms the oft-repeated remark, "Knowledge is power." He, therefore, who would learn human nature, must cultivate his perceptive and discriminative faculties, so that he may be attentive to his own feelings and emotions, and may scrutinize the actions of others, whether brought to his notice by history or personal observation. Those works which are classed under the general head of light reading are frequently of service, not only as specimens of beautiful style, but also as containing good delineations of human character, whether seen when the heart is buoyant with anticipated happiness, or when it is suffering under all the aggravated griefs of blighted hopes, blasted prospects, and withered joys. He, however, who peruses them to while away a leisure hour, or to gratify morbid sensibilities, or for the sake of present intellectual enjoyment, cannot expect to add any thing to his stock of useful knowledge; he is only increasing an appetite, the gratification of which produces intellectual and moral disease.

That is a true sentiment of the poet,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

The novice in this science must be content with wielding but a small influence; while the proficient holds in his hand a lever of unknown power. He alone can describe the circuitous windings of the labyrinth who has himself often wandered through them.

Knowledge of the nature and power of language is also indispensable. If a chemist were well acquainted with the nature of all the substances in his laboratory, but had no instruments for manipulation, it would be vain for him to remain there; for he could perform no experiments by which he might advance the interests of science. So with writers and speakers. They must possess a knowledge not only of men, but also of the instruments by which they can be affected. Some individuals have a familiar acquaintance with human nature, but, for want of this knowledge, are utterly incapable of turning it to any valuable account. It may please and profit them, but to the public it is as useless as a rich, but inaccessible mine of gold. On the other hand, we often see one individual of limited knowledge exerting a greater influence than another of profound erudition, because he has acquired the art of exhibiting what he does know, and has the happy faculty of expressing his ideas in beautiful and impressive language.

Men may naturally differ as it regards the faculty of acquiring and using language; but all can improve, and all should endeavour to use that language which will best convey their exact meaning. I do not say that every individual ought to be able to apply to every sentence, at a moment's notice, the rules of grammar and of rhetoric, but he should, if possible, acquaint himself with the principles on which these sciences are founded, and form his taste in accordance with them, that he may avoid errors, and write and speak with propriety.

We have all noticed the effect which beautiful language and fine figures have produced on our own minds; we have been delighted and charmed, and have almost loved the writer or speaker for the enjoyment which he has afforded us. And although we may not have been pleased with his sentiments, yet we have exercised far more for-

bearance and charity than if they had been couched in homely phrase. We have witnessed the effect which a speaker who is a master of language has produced upon his audience ; they have, at one time, been wrought into frenzy, and at another melted into tears ; and all this has been effected when the ideas advanced were quite common-place. So general is the admiration of beautiful language and figures, that we not unfrequently find specimens of them going the rounds of the daily prints. Shakspeare rendered his name immortal, not only by the knowledge of human nature which he exhibited, but also by the language in which that knowledge was conveyed. Hence writers, at the present day, resort to his works as to the great storehouse whence to obtain materials which shall give the finish to their productions. And so apt and forcible are his expressions, that they are common among all classes of men.

An *enlightened understanding* (and I use this term to include the judgment and the reasoning powers) is also requisite. So obvious is this requisition, that it scarcely seems necessary to dwell upon it. Whatever other qualifications we may possess, if we are destitute of this we shall be unable to effect any great and permanent good in any station in society or in the church. Without this we shall move along like a vessel with every sail set, and every pennon flying in the breeze, but with no rudder by which to steer clear of rocks and quicksands. This is that "round-about common sense," for the destitution of which nothing can atone, and the loss of which nothing can repair.

It is judgment alone that can teach us how to avail ourselves of the knowledge which we may have acquired. We behold its exercise in every man who discharges with success the duties of life. The sabbath-school teacher manifests it in the government and instruction of the

children committed to his care. The artful politician exhibits a specimen of judgment disciplined in the ranks of party. In every popular speaker, also, we may behold the exercise of a well-trained judgment in the arrangement of his discourse, in the skilful management of his own feelings and those of his audience, and in his taking advantage of the very moment or circumstance best adapted to make them accord with him in his views and feelings.

That the reasoning powers should be duly cultivated appears evident from the fact that no one can maintain a permanent influence over men without their exercise. The empty, boisterous declaimer, can never for a long time sway the sceptre. We naturally ask, What is all this for? Is his object reasonable? Are his plans feasible? Are the arguments adduced valid, and will they bear close examination? This appears still more evident from the consideration that the present is an age of discussion. Every subject, whether relating to science, arts, politics, or religion, is debatable. No topic is too trifling to enlist advocates and opponents; no subject too momentous to secure foes as well as friends. Men seem determined to meet each other on the field of argument, and test their respective strength. Old systems are undergoing alterations; and every alteration requires a regular campaign to test its worth. New systems are brought before the public; to persuade us to adopt them their advocates use reason, and some, alas! are not very reluctant to use sophistry. Every individual, therefore, who stands forth in defence of truth should be able to show that truth alone is reasonable. He should present to the public satisfactory proof that he thus acts because he thus believes; and that his belief is not founded on the opinions of others, but on his own convictions. He should be able to convince them that his understanding has been sufficiently cultivated to enable him to discover and expose the errors

as well as the fallacies of his opponents, and that he is able to stand erect upon the field of argument. Unless he can do this he can have no confidence in himself, and no expectation of usefulness. An age of intensity and debate will discover his defects. He will be unable to command attention, and will be compelled to leave the field without even covering his retreat.

The *power of analysis* is, likewise, a necessary requisite. By this I mean the faculty of perceiving and exhibiting the main principles upon which every science and every system depends. By analysis every disguise and ornament is stripped of, and the naked thought displayed; a process analogous to that which a skilful anatomist uses in obtaining a good skeleton. The habit of analysis is necessary to assist us in our own mental operations, and to enable us fully to examine any subject. It is of great service also in reading. It is indispensable to every extemporary speaker, to enable him to see the end from the beginning, and to bring every thing to bear upon the object to be accomplished;—a peculiarity for which Lord Brougham is remarkable, and in which lies a great part of his power. Those general remarks which are made without any specific object or design produce no direct effect: the reason is obvious; they are not designed to produce any direct effect; the speaker himself does not know to what his remarks are tending, and is it surprising that his hearers should be enveloped in similar ignorance?

Unless an individual has carefully analyzed a subject, he cannot proceed advantageously in its discussion. Such discussion would resemble a house which a carpenter had built without having previously drafted a plan. As no man of taste would live in such a house, so no man of sense would listen to such a discussion. There are some men who will so readily answer an opponent, or, with

scarce a moment's study, reply to an address, that they seem to do it instinctively; but it is previous thought, and the habit of analysis, that have given them this power. We sometimes call it heaven-born genius; but, name it as we will, it grows on earth, and is the offspring of labour and mental discipline.

This habit must be acquired to enable us successfully to contend with an opponent. We must not only be able to ascertain the precise meaning of his words, but must also be able to carry back his positions to first principles, if we would so answer him as to expose the weakness, or detect the fallacy, of his arguments. It is this habit which renders the advocate at the bar successful and luminous in his pleas. He takes both a comprehensive and a minute view of the argument of his professional brother, and is thus prepared to refute what may be refuted, and to counterbalance the remainder by his own force and adroitness.

This power is an indispensable qualification for a teacher. The whole process of instruction is to advance from principles to facts, and to deduce principles from facts. Who can teach another what he himself has not learned? Who can make that, of which he himself has but an imperfect conception, plain to another?

Especially incumbent is it upon every young person, at the present day, to analyze the great subjects of discussion among us, that from just premises he may arrive at those conclusions which shall show him the duties required at his hands, and the manner in which they must be discharged. How numerous and momentous are the questions which now agitate the community, and how great and sacred the interests which they involve! Now, indeed, is the time for men to think and act for themselves, and to take their own individual responsibilities. The latter rest upon them, however they may neglect to do

the former! Who will weigh even the political responsibilities of the young men of this generation? Who, that loves his country, will doubt the propriety of becoming acquainted with politics? I speak not of party politics, but of politics as a science, embracing the theory of government—the duties and powers of rulers and subjects—the protective and banking systems—the commercial and the agricultural interests of the community—and all those questions which vitally affect the welfare of nations, and the very existence of republics? Who will say that these subjects can be investigated without analyzing them?

The *power of generalization* must be added to that of analysis. And by this I mean the applying of one general law to all the subjects which it embraces; as the applying of the morality of the gospel to all the minutiae of public, social, domestic, and private life. Without further remarks, you will see the importance which must be attached to this by every reflecting mind, and its intimate connection with the duties of a sabbath-school teacher.

Patient thought is the last requisite which we will notice. It is mental labour which causes the chief difference between man and man considered as an intellectual being. Without it, none can hope to arrive at greatness; with it, none need fear being dwarfs in literature or science. It will readily be admitted, that we must exercise patient thought, if we would treat on any subject so as to interest and profit men; we must revolve it in our minds again and again, till we are satisfied that it cannot appear to us in any new light, and that we are fully prepared to defend every position which we have assumed. True, we may read various authors, and then use their ideas; but in this case there would be no originality, and, by consequence, no credit, except for patient research. Should the present generation pursue the course of copy-

ing from their predecessors, the world would be but little wiser for us; and “if that severe doom of Synesius be true, *it is a greater offence to steal dead men’s labours than their clothes*, what shall become of most [modern] writers?”*

Let us, however, neither undervalue nor overvalue reading. All historical works, and all elementary works, numerous as they are, must be studied as text-books. We expect to derive our knowledge of principles from elementary books, and the knowledge which these contain must be regarded as common property. Thus commentaries are valuable when we resort to them as sources of historical and critical knowledge; but if we use them as common-place books from which to obtain ideas, they may do us more harm than good. There are other works that must be studied for the sake of the information which they contain; and many of them should be used as a sort of capital on which to commence thinking; as a merchant hires a thousand dollars on which to commence business, and then depends entirely upon his own resources.

Patient thought is entirely opposed to that method of reading which is practised by many individuals, viz., reading without reflection,—without questioning the truth of the author’s sentiments, ascertaining the correctness of his positions, or examining the soundness of his principles, but indiscriminately approving the whole.

The neglect of patient thought is the great cause of that superficial knowledge which prevails at the present day. Many individuals seem to think that they can very easily ascend the steeps of science, by the aid of a few books and popular lectures. Indeed, some would fain persuade us to believe that a rail-road to knowledge has already been constructed, and that we can arrive at the desired depot in twelve winter evenings. Men may amuse

* Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy.

themselves with these pleasing dreams, but they must at last wake up to the sober reality of labour—constant, persevering labour—if they would ensure success. Patient thought is indispensable to intellectual improvement.

If I have succeeded in showing you that these are the requisites for the possession of such a style of thought and expression as will enable us to be useful in our several callings, I have shown you that it is a “duty incumbent upon all young persons, and especially upon all sabbath-school teachers, to improve their intellectual faculties.” I cheerfully submit these views to your further investigation, hoping thereby to promote the usefulness of sabbath schools, the welfare of our country, and the interests of the church. We need, I trust, no other incentive to exertion than love to that precious cause in which we have embarked our all for time and for eternity. We are looking for no higher honour than the approbation of our Master—no greater reward than a crown of righteousness. To none of us may have been intrusted splendid natural talents, and to but few of us may God have given favourable opportunities for intellectual improvement. Let us, however, gratefully receive, and carefully improve, whatever he has committed to our trust, in the humble but confident expectation that he will continue still to display his infinite wisdom, in causing “the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

And as in the darkest storms bright spots are seen, so when doubts and fears come over my mind, one ray of light still shines and illumines the darkness. But after all, I sometimes greatly fear that I am deceived, and that my feelings have run away with me; but I pray God to make known to me my true situation, and to lead me in the right way; for it is my chief object to try to love and serve him. Are these, my dear parents, the feelings which spring up in every Christian's bosom? Do Christians doubt and fear? Or have they a constant peace which removes every doubt and fear, and keeps them near the throne of God? I ask you, for you have learned by the experience of years the feelings which are peculiar to the children of God, and you are able to instruct and comfort me on my way through the dreary pilgrimage of life to the blessed society in heaven. O, pray for me, and let us endeavour to be among the followers of Christ, and then we cannot but be useful and happy.

TO THE SAME.

March 28, 1832.

I have no desire to live for any other purpose than to be useful to my fellow-beings, and to become meet for the inheritance above. True, I wish to do something in the world which shall cause my name to be remembered with pleasure when my body shall have crumbled into dust; yet I desire to lay my little all at the foot of the cross, and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And when my influence (if I shall ever be blest with the means of doing good) shall have ceased, when my soul shall have become ripe for heaven, then shall I delight to "lay down the burden of this wearisome life," and pass over the cold river of death. You, my dear parents, are further advanced in life than your sons; you may be much nearer the eternal world; one step more, and your sighs and

sufferings may all be buried in the grave ; let us then try to spend the remainder of our days in the service of our Master, and not in excessive sorrow. Besides, you have been highly favoured of God ; he has given you a competence of the good things of earth, while thousands pine in poverty and want ; he has given you a well-founded hope of happiness hereafter, and prepared a mansion for you in heaven, while multitudes are living "having no hope, and without God in the world," and millions are inhabiting the dismal regions of hell. The most ardent wish of your souls has been, that you might live to see your children become the followers of Jesus ; and perhaps your wish has been realized beyond your fondest expectations ; for many of them are already in heaven, and those who yet remain are, I humbly trust, walking in the straight and narrow way, with dauntless step and watchful eye, and full determination to gain the prize.

There were many meliorating circumstances attending the death of our beloved Mary. She was a Christian ; her life bore ample testimony that her heart was renewed, and warmed by the love of Jesus. She died at home ; her last, fond look was cast upon her dearest friends, and her last words were the accents of love. She was willing to go whenever her Lord should send for her, having her lamp trimmed and burning. She died in full prospect of heaven ; no cloud obscured the radiance of her setting sun ; no gales of doubt or temptation shattered her bark of heavenly hope ; she saw her friends on the other side of the river waiting with open arms to receive her ; and, O "praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men !" she arrived safely in the port of everlasting rest. And now, my dear parents, conceive, if you can, for a moment, the feelings which must have agitated your bosoms, had our Mary manifested a fear of death, and a dread to appear before her God ;

had the frowns of justice, instead of the smiles of mercy, rested upon her. You cannot indeed conceive of all the poignancy of these feelings, which God has prevented you from realizing, but you can conceive of enough to make you almost *forget to mourn*. Often think of this, and I doubt not your hearts will expand with gratitude.

But though our Mary is dead, though the heart which once beat with sympathy and affection is hushed in the silence of the grave, have we not reason to believe that love for us is still cherished by the saint in heaven? that departed spirits may be the guardian angels of their surviving relatives? And shall not our little family be hereafter united around our Father's throne? Shall we not *all* meet there to part no more? Shall we not recognise each other there? O! pleasing thoughts! earthly pleasures vanish when compared with them. Surely, there is nothing mournful in the death of Mary; we could indeed have wished that the summons had not so soon arrived, but we will say with resignation, *It was the Lord's time*. Death entered our dwelling stripped of all its terrors; it came like a kind angel to release the heavenly spirit from its earthly clay; it came not unexpected; it hovered round and round, and lingered oft, as if unwilling to perform its office; and when at last, by God's command, it touched the suffering saint, its touch was soft as that of a kind mother on her infant's brow; the soul began its flight, and the tired wheels of nature ceased to move. But I must tear myself away from this subject; it is almost too much for a human mind to dwell upon.

I humbly trust I am still engaged in the service of God; yet my thoughts are so sinful, my earthly desires, affections, and passions, so little curbed, that I sometimes feel almost ready to give up all for lost; but I still love to pray to God and read his holy word, and sometimes rejoice in the faint hope I cherish of being able by his blessing, by

and by, to bring lost sinners to the foot of the cross. I desire to promote the cause of Christ; but this seems almost impossible, for I possess but very little piety or wisdom. I feel to say with Moses of old, "I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." You will inform me in your next what you think of my religious feelings and prospects; for I have no wish to be deceived. I was happy to hear that you had not forgotten me in your prayers at the throne of grace; my dear father and mother are also the subjects of my daily prayers.

TO THE SAME.

April 17, 1832.

I never felt so exhausted, or so far "*run down*" as to powers of mind as I do at present; and I am heartily glad that the time draws near when I shall be permitted to relax my efforts, and draw off my thoughts from mathematics, &c. Surely, my dear parents, the roots of knowledge are *bitter*; wisdom can never be obtained by indolence and ease.

My religious enjoyments for a few days past have not been so great as I could wish; there is so much depravity within, and there are so many temptations without, that I find myself unable to serve God with that zeal with which I desire to serve him. Sabbath evening I spent an hour and a half in prayer for more grace, and for a clear evidence of the pardon of my sins. I cannot but believe that God did then forgive my sins, though I did not enjoy an immediate evidence of it, and now rely upon no other proof than this; I am calm and happy, and do not feel the condemnation which I then felt. Yet I sometimes fear that this tranquil state of mind may be owing to the Holy Spirit's having taken his flight, leaving me to go on in peace to the gates of hell! But, blessed be God, I believe this fear to be a temptation of the adversary of souls.

TO THE SAME.

January 24, 1833.

. . . . I was about to explain the difference between *going to*, and *departing from*, my own loved home ; but I forbear. Enough to say, that *here* no mother greets her son, no father listens to his artless tale. The cold and calculating materialist may look back, and recount with mournful joy the pleasures passed away ; he may despair of ever finding the like again ; he may in the hour of loneliness cherish with delight his fancied hope of annihilation. But the humble Christian, when he grasps the hand of affection, and utters the farewell words, when he leaves his dearest friends for months, or years, or for life, need not despair. There is a brighter world than this. Faith opens to his view a land of glory, the saint's eternal home ; it holds out to him the robe of righteousness and the victor's crown, as incentives to exertion. Do you not think of these things, my dear parents, when your sons leave you ? Did they not revive your drooping spirits when Mary took her flight to heaven ? Strange would it be should the Christian ever lose sight of these most transporting truths. The bow of earthly promise which God placed in the cloud after the deluge, appears only when the storm has *passed away* ; the bow of heavenly promise, illumined by the rays of the Sun of righteousness, appears when the clouds *are gathering* ; and as the storm approaches nearer and nearer, it glows with heavenly lustre, till at last, when darkness envelops the Christian, and his heart trembles within him, it says in the language of assurance, " Fear thou not ; for I am with thee." The storm subsides, but the bow remains ; it will remain with the faithful till they have passed over Jordan, and entered the city of their God. Dear parents, while we behold this bow we need not despond ; it will cheer

the darkest day, and illumine the most dismal night : but if we prove unfaithful, it will be withdrawn from our view. May God help us to endure to the end, that we may be saved.

TO THE SAME.

February 24, 1833.

I sometimes imagine myself on the verge of that world to which we, my dear parents, are so rapidly tending. At times I feel prepared to bid farewell to the scenes of earth, and depart. Indeed, I often think that were I assured of happiness hereafter, and were I to know that, during the course of a long life, I should be the means of good to no one, but that my early death would lead one sinner to reflect upon the worth of his soul, and lay up his treasure in heaven, I would gladly die young. But there are those for whom I should live; parents and friends have centred some hopes in me, which I pray God I may not disappoint; there are those over whom I may reasonably hope, if faithful, to exert a salutary influence. And though I cannot yet say that my little influence has favoured the cause of virtue more than that of vice, I will not despond, since I am conscious my intentions have been good. In looking upon the past I have much to regret; privileges have been abused, blessings slighted, time wasted; yet in reviewing the last eighteen months there is some joy in the reflection that the wayward course of nature has been turned into the paths of piety. But O! sin, sin still lurks in my heart, and strives to corrupt it. You, my dear parents, will pray for me that my faith may not fail. And may He who never slumbers nor sleeps guide us in the path of virtue, that life may be pleasant, and death delightful.

TO MR. JAMES POOL, JUN., LYNN.

March, 20, 1833.

Rocks and hills may separate us, and the pressing cares of life may forbid an interchange of feelings, but they need not destroy them. Death may remove the object of our affections, but memory shall recall it and clothe it in all the beauty and vigour of youth. Besides, there is a fairer world beyond the grave. We need not go mourning like the materialist or the Sadducee, since we believe in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. While death erects a barrier over which the friendship of sinners cannot pass, while the thick gloom of hell admits no cheering ray of sympathy, and excludes the beams of hope, the humble Christian knows that his friendship shall enter the gates of heaven! There, my dear James, we hope to meet our Mary. We may not go together; we may not cross the stream of death in company, but we are travelling thither. No matter how long or short the road, provided it lead us to our Father's house. O! let us be faithful, that we may all meet in heaven.

“Thrice happy meeting!

Nor time nor death shall ever part us more.”

I cannot say that my future prospects, in which you take an interest, appear more flattering than when I last wrote you. The clouds may break only over my grave! True, my brother, I have concluded that I shall be a Methodist preacher; but I cannot tell whether I shall be well pleasing to God, and acceptable to my brethren. This awful question remains undecided. The thought of being an unfaithful minister is enough to appal the stoutest heart. To think of a minister appearing before God amid all the terrors of the judgment day, stained with the blood of souls, is too much for a mortal. What, O! what must be

his guilt! Disgraced, he seeks in vain a shelter from the wrath of an offended Judge! I pray that if I should engage in the work of the ministry, I may not "count my life dear unto myself," but may labour and toil till the Master shall call me home. Reasoning from the past, I cannot expect that the labours of a minister will permit me a long life. But what cause is so noble? what so worthy of a man's life? The patriot fights for his country, the Christian for his God. One receives his reward from his country, the other from his God. Still, James, I desire not to be over-anxious about the future. Thus far God has led me on, and I will trust in him. I fear we too often sin by distrusting his goodness.

TO HIS PARENTS.

April 1, 1833.

During this term my feelings have been different from what they ever were before. This may in a great measure be owing to the resolution which I made at its commencement, and which, through the grace of God, I have been enabled in some good degree to keep, that I would love God more and serve him better; that I would daily strive to grow in grace. I have felt a desire to act in perfect accordance with the will of God; to do nothing which would be displeasing in his sight. I have desired to act so prudently that, whatever consequences might follow, I should not be compelled to blame myself. Upon all my actions of importance I have seemed to see inscribed in legible characters, ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES. And in those moments of despondency which often visit me, it really seems as if the thought of my responsibility would for ever crush me to the earth.

TO THE SAME.

July 4, 1833.

A few days since I went to the office, received the Lynn paper, and retired to my room. As my custom is, I first sought to learn who had passed from this to another world. And O! the melancholy fact, a once-loved school-mate is no more. And can it be that Miss M., young and accomplished as she was, is numbered with the dead? does the green sward lie upon that heart which so lately beat quick with joy, and which was so ready to sympathize with the daughters of affliction? Do the clods of the valley restrain the benevolence of those hands which were wont to scatter blessings in the paths of want? Are those eyes closed in death which, but a short time since, looked forward to many and happy days? * *

In compliance with your wishes, I have not studied as much as usual this term, and have therefore had more time for reflection. I have reflected much upon my own condition, and upon the inducements to live for another world. The result of my reflections is, that I see myself to be a poor, sinful being, utterly incapable, of myself, to do any thing to merit the divine approbation. My only hope of salvation is based upon the death of Jesus Christ; my chief desire is to live to his glory. How glorious are the motives which should incite us to regard this life only as preparative to another! How glorious will be that day when we shall rise from the dead to "be ever with the Lord!" O, I often look forward to it with lively emotions of joy. Pray for me, my dear parents, that I may not at last be "weighed in the balances, and found wanting!"

TO THE SAME.

September 17, 1833.

You have heard that I arrived here in safety, and you are probably familiar with the exercises of commence-

ment. The three days after commencement passed heavily away ; nothing to interest the mind but the gloomy prospect of a hard term's study. There are times, my dear parents, when every thing seems to conspire to make one melancholy ; and never before have I known so many to rush upon me. My room no longer looks like former times ; a carpet, bureau, stove, &c., have materially changed its appearance ; the old bedstead alone looks familiar. I enter it as a stranger, and feel that it no longer loves me, no longer sympathizes in my sorrows. I am now the only Methodist in the university. Far from home and friends, I am in a great measure shut out from the blessings of life and the endearments of social affection. A wide, unfriendly world is before me ; I am ill prepared to bear its neglect, ill prepared to meet its trials ; yet I must soon enter upon its duties. College now affords me a shelter, but it will soon deny it. And, as if to make me more unhappy still, the shortened days and howling winds proclaim the near approach of that season when my heart sinks within me. You may smile at what you may call the ideal miseries of life, or an imaginary tale of distress ; but I appeal to my brother if he has not felt all this. "All this ?—*yea, more.*" 'The testimony of two witnesses, dear parents, is true.

But every picture has its bright side, and so has this. I feel grateful for the advantages of education, and humbly trust they will not be lost upon me. I turn my thoughts to you, dear parents, with emotions of joy. I prize your affection, which has borne with the follies and sins of my youth, and which so early pointed me to the grave, and to that region which lies beyond it. I bless that hand which, under God, has supplied all my wants. I cannot repay you for your love, nor can I discharge the debt of gratitude I owe you : to God alone must I commend you ; to him alone can you look for your reward. I reflect with

fondness upon a brother's love, and rejoice in his prosperity. Other friends share in my affections, and sometimes occupy my thoughts; but they do not diminish the love which I bear to you. No; true affection, like the loaves which were distributed among the five thousand, increases with the number of its partakers; it may be divided, but, unlike many other things, dividing does not diminish it. I trust also that the education which you have given me the means of obtaining will enable me to meet the difficulties of life; should it not make me happy, it may make me useful. The gloomy autumn, too, bids me look forward to happier days. While it reminds me of the frailty of man, and of the transitory nature of earthly bliss, it points me to a land of glory encircled by an everlasting spring. There no falling leaves tell of man's mortality, but perpetual verdure speaks his immortal youth. There no chilling winds pierce the vitals, but gentle zephyrs waft the songs of angels. O! there may we dwell for ever.

TO HIS BROTHER.

October 5, 1833.

I despise, as well as yourself, the character of a flatterer; it ill becomes the dignity of a man. And when I reflect how difficult it is *to compliment* a man modestly, I am surprised that so many think themselves fully adequate to the still more difficult task of flattery. The world seem to swallow adulation greedily; but he who would praise a sensitive man must touch the finest sensibilities of the soul with fingers light as the mellow zephyrs.

What a charm do college walls reflect upon the quiet scenery of home! How lovely an appearance does distance lend to an absent fireside! We muse upon its happiness, and when the trance is over, it seems "as a dream when one awaketh;" we wonder at the strange flight that fancy has taken, and wish its wings would never tire, its

journey never end. Thus have my feelings often prompted me to say, and I presume, my dear brother, you will not hesitate to sympathize with me.

Thus the very feelings of the soul prove its immortality; always unsatisfied with present enjoyments, it looks forward to other scenes; it soars above the earth, and seeks some region where there are pleasures suited to its capacities. And here the awful question arises, Are we preparing to leave this world, and enter on an untried state of existence? Are our affections disengaging themselves from "the things which are seen," and fixing themselves upon "the things which are not seen?" Are our souls daily becoming more and more fit for the refined enjoyments of heaven? Assured I am that I cannot too often think of death, eternity, and judgment to come. And though I humbly trust I have been "born again," though I feel attached to the cause of Christ, and am willing to lay down my life as an humble defender of the faith, yet often do I feel constrained to say, I am not prepared to die. I desire so to live that I may calmly, yea, joyfully, expect the approach of death. Let us, my dear brother, never cease to bear each other in the arms of faith and prayer to him who shall be our Judge.

And this reminds me of a subject on which we have before spoken; that is, the ministry. What say you, my brother; will you be a minister of the gospel? In one of your former letters you remarked that you were not sure you were called to preach. In answer to this, dear brother, I would ask, does not the assertion, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few," often ring in your ears? I would not urge the subject, for it is a matter between you and your God. Do, dear brother, settle the question, and inform me in your next of your determination. Surely there is no time for delay, for the church and the world are both awaiting your decision.

TO THE SAME.

November 4, 1833.

The world calls the zeal of the Christian enthusiasm, and teaches her votaries to laugh at it; but I would that every precious sinner were blessed with such enthusiasm! The death-bed would not be so often shrouded in darkness. O! I will tell the sinner that enthusiasm like this will never be allayed, but will increase for ever in glory. I will tell him that enthusiasm like this can exist only in the heart of the Christian. I will warn him not to despise it, for he will one day need all the consolations which it can give, and all the bright prospects which it can create.

I agree with you in your remarks respecting going to Liberia. Perhaps they were kindly suggested, my father, to allay the excitement of an ardent mind; perhaps you thought that imagination was too predominant, and that it might at last prompt me to become (in appearance at least) a missionary. If such were your thoughts, let me tell you, you had mistaken your son; never would I bear the missionary's standard without having in my heart the missionary's spirit. It would be hard, too, to convince me that it is my duty to preach the gospel without the limits of my country. If I have any talents, Methodism in New-England needs them all; if I can do any good, she tells me to do it for her. Really, my dear parents, our church is not in a condition now to spare many of her sons; she needs them all to go through her own borders, and rouse her own members. She needs eloquent men to plead the cause of missions; she needs strong men to sound the alarm, and wise men to marshal her ranks for battle. Our church cannot yet lay down her arms; (alas! I fear she often forgets this!) sinners are still waging war against God, and his requisition is, *Come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*

TO HIS BROTHER.

November 19, 1833.

I heartily approve of your remarks on popular applause. Perhaps, dear brother, I am really too desirous to obtain it; perhaps I am deceived in regard to my feelings on this subject. I desire popularity, but that only which is secured by a firm adherence to truth. If by walking undeviatingly in the paths of virtue, if by unshrinking courage in exposing the follies and vices, the evils and corruptions of the world, I can obtain the praise of men, I welcome it; but if, on the contrary, such a course of conduct shall but ensure their frowns, these frowns will I welcome and garner up as pledges of my fidelity, and an earnest of my reward. I ask for no higher name than that of an humble, sincere follower of Christ, willing to dedicate talents and life to his cause, and eager to hang every trophy upon the cross. You see then the popularity I desire. The reason I desire it is, that I may be the more useful; for a popular man, other things being equal, must be more successful as a minister than an unpopular, or an indifferent man. I think, dear brother, I am willing to be and to do any thing for the sake of the glory of God, and if I can only be sure that I am wholly under the guidance of his Spirit, I will be fully satisfied. It is difficult I know to analyze one's feelings, and ascertain the real character of the motives by which he is actuated. I feel my liability to be deceived, and my need of divine assistance: the only question which affects my mind concerning the ministry is, Are my motives pure and holy? O! my brother, what a question for an immortal soul to answer! May we never enter the ministry with unholy motives!

TO HIS PARENTS.

February 14, 1834.

The journey of life is like that of the traveller who climbs a mountain that intervenes between him and his well-loved home. He has reached the summit; but he cannot stop there to rest his wearied limbs; he cannot linger to breathe the purer air, nor can he wait to indulge in his own imaginings, or to gaze upon the sublime scenery around him, and the fair picture of the world below him; no, he must descend if he would reach his home. So man walks from the cradle to the summit of life's hill, but cannot stop there; indeed, he knows not when he has reached it, but soon finds that he is not now ascending, but descending, and that too with a velocity which he cannot retard. Life's moon has begun to wane, but it will wax no more. It may be that I have already reached my little summit, and am now travelling down to the vale of oblivion. If so, improvement in piety may be expected, but not improvement in intellect. True, I have travelled but a little while, yet there are short as well as long journeys. A short journey may, in the wise and merciful dispensations of Providence, have been assigned to him who is incapable of performing a longer. O! why then should I complain? Be this as it may, however, dear parents, there is a period in the life of every man when he must adopt the pathetic words of the favoured forerunner of Christ, "I must decrease;" there is a time when with his own hand he must write upon his brow, "The glory is departed."

But you will say this is a strange way of answering letters; so it is; I'll try now to do better. Well then, your kind letter was received with great pleasure; it was written in a strain of melancholy which well harmonized with my own feelings. Not that I have become a hypo-

chondriac—I have only laid aside all gayety and imagination, and am endeavouring to look at things as they really are: I have retired from a thoughtless world, and am holding communion with my own heart. * * *

You speak of our once-loved Mary; she has occupied a large share in my thoughts for a few weeks past. O! it is well to remember her, that we may imitate her virtues, and grow familiar with the dead. But I cannot mourn for her; for myself, for you, for all her dear friends, I can mourn; but not for her. She is happy in the unclouded presence of her God. The Angel of the covenant has given her a harp, whose strings can never jar; she sings the praises of the Lamb that was slain. O! how sweet that song which echoes through the arches of glory! How delightful that countenance which has gazed upon her triumphant Saviour till it has caught his smiles! How happy that heart which is free from suffering and sin! Dear, departed Mary, we once called you ours; we once claimed alliance to you, and thought you “bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh.” We lavished upon you our smiles and our affection. We now cherish your memory; we recall all that was lovely in the days of your sojourning with us, and weep in solitude over our irreparable loss. We repair to the lonely grave-yard, and wander among the many monuments of mortality, till we reach that spot where we deposited the once living receptacle of your immortal spirit. We call to mind the chamber where you tarried, and the bed on which you lay; we see you smiling under suffering, rejoicing in affliction, and waiting with patience the summons of your God. We see you die in peace, and we almost see the ransomed soul winging its way to glory. We place our hands on the grave-stone, and lift our weeping eyes to God, imploring a death like yours, and a seat with you on the right hand of the throne in heaven. O! do not now disown us,

though you are a glorified saint! You have reached heaven before us. O! how little did we once think it would be so; how rarely did it enter into our minds that we might bury you! But we are trying to follow in your footsteps, that we may share in your glory. We may soon reach our journey's end; the coming spring may see our bodies sleeping with yours under the clods of the valley; the May-flower may blossom on our graves, and the pale violet, emblem of life's sweetest joys and fairest hopes, may droop and die on the turf which covers us. O Mary! will you stand in the portals of heaven with open arms to welcome our arrival? Will you recognise us there as those who were your friends on earth? O! will you recognise us as the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus? Well then, "all is well." But can you not tell us how soon we shall come to you? How long must we wait in this dull world? When will the walls of our prison decay and let us out? No! you cannot tell us! O! then, dear Mary, we must still mourn our absence from heaven and all that is delightful.

I regret, my dear parents, that you are again left alone, with neither of your children near to assist you. Such, however, is the sad condition of human life; we meet to smile for a moment, and part to mourn over "days of absence." I trust, however, that when you bid adieu to your sons, you do it under an impressive sense of the uncertainty of meeting them again on earth; while you feel that you yourselves are travelling to the grave, you remember that they may reach that bourn before you. O! you must not forget that this is possible—yea, probable.

TO THE SAME.

March 5, 1834.

In a previous letter, my dear parents, you speak of several things which are very interesting, to which I will now recur. You seem to console yourselves with the thought that your sons are better prepared to meet the storms of life than you yourselves were. I can here speak only for myself, and I would tell you all my feelings. I realize that the time is fast approaching when I must engage in the busy scenes of life ; college walls will soon turn me out upon the wide world, prepared or unprepared. I must breast the torrent, and stand ready to meet life's roughest surges. I feel too that I must do this alone ; no mortal hand can support-my head, should it sink beneath the billows. I must depend on my own derived power ; yes, derived power, for it comes from God. I feel grateful for the privileges with which I have been blessed, but it yet remains to be proved whether they will increase my happiness and usefulness ; the result alone can tell whether your labour, which has been so kindly lavished upon your son, will have been lost, and whether all your fond expectations will fall to the ground. O ! I pray your hopes may all be realized, and that you may live to see your sons growing up to be ornaments in the church, and blessings to the world.

You say, too, that you are conscious you are travelling to the grave. Yes, so it is ; you have been travelling for some years, and you have gone over a tiresome road ; the "rough ascent," rather than the "flowery slope," has been your lot. Still, your journey has, thus far, been a safe one ; you have, through the great mercy of God, been blessed with prosperity and comfort. Surely we must conclude that your journey is more than half completed. O ! how do you feel when you think of this ? I trust you

have no harassing doubts, no misgiving fears, but that you are filled with confidence and peace. Rely upon the Saviour, and he cannot leave you. We must soon go; yes, we must meet death! There is no escape—no by-road to heaven—no door to glory but the grave. Well then, let us nerve ourselves for the conflict; it will soon be over. Here the sinner parts with his last friend, and the Christian with his last enemy! Yes! fainting Christian, death is thy *last* foe, and thy Lord hath overcome even him. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth:" the Christian's God hath slain the Christian's last foe; for *he entered into the strong man's house, and bound him, and spoiled him of his goods.* Well, my parents, this is consolation. When I think of dying I cannot but weep; I do not fear the consequences, for I believe that, though unworthy, I should go to heaven; but to think of the dying struggle—of the separation between soul and body—of the last, deep-drawn breath—O! 'tis dreadful. Yet the precious Redeemer will give grace to support us; if we are faithful to him now, he will not desert us then, and leave us to find our way alone "through the valley of the shadow of death."

I am sorry, my dear parents, you are so anxious about me; you seem unwilling to believe your own son. If I were sick, should I not tell you? Never have I given you cause to say "No" to this question. I wish you always to think of me as well and happy; and if I say nothing respecting my health, consider me well. I cannot make this subject "a prominent part of my letter," for I have but little to say. . . . I do not study hard, and I think I am now in a fair way to recover my health again, and to be better than ever before. I am very much encouraged in regard to my health, and the only thing which I fear is, that it may hurt me to preach much after I get through college. I am determined, however, not to worry about

this, but to leave it with God. And now I really hope you will be perfectly satisfied.

It is, my dear parents, one of the most delightful days I ever saw; the sky is unclouded, and the breezes of heaven are pure and exhilarating; how sweetly they fan a sinful world! All around is lovely, and speaks of a fast-coming spring; all is well calculated to make the heart happy, and to inspire it with ennobling views of the Author of nature. Yet I am not very happy; I remember that this day's sun sees me twenty-one years old. Can it be, dear parents, that I have lived so long and done so little? O! there is *not one* consoling reflection connected with my birth-day; there is not one thought which can cause a smile to flicker on my countenance. My life hitherto has been made up of inconsistency and folly, and small indeed is the prospect of amendment. Your son is too proud, too ambitious, too desirous of the esteem of men. O! I wish I were perfectly holy and humble; were I so, there would be reason to think that I might become a blessing to some souls. I dare not go over the events of my past life; they would stare me in the face, and fill my soul with horror; I know their sum full well, and it is admirably expressed in the words of the wise man, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." My dear father and mother, accept my sincere thanks for all your care and kindness. You have done all to make me blessed that the kindest parents could do; you have laboured assiduously to make me useful "in my day and generation." I can only thank you on this my birth-day, but God knows my heart; would I could open it to you! but I cannot. I must leave this subject—my tears will not allow me to proceed. For all, for all your kindness I thank you; this is all I can do, and I shall never be able to do more. I wish I could hope to meet your expectations, but I cannot. Forgive, my dear parents, all my errors, and may

God bless you! O! I will ever "commend you to him, and to the word of his grace;" and may the prayers of a disconsolate, sinful son be heard in heaven and answered on earth! I am still your Wells; O! then do not forget to pray for me that I may be humble, holy, and useful.

TO THE SAME.

March 20, 1834.

I would not have you think, dear parents, that because I cannot be all that I would wish, I am discouraged. Far from it; I expect to live long enough to show to those around me that money and labour have not been entirely thrown away upon me. I expect to show that my soul, though marred by sin, has some native energy left. I expect the assistance of my God; and blessed with this, no affliction, no calamity, no mortal, shall cramp my energies or cause me to fear. I feel firm and resolute, perhaps too much so for a young man; I am well assured I shall not die without exerting some influence which shall be felt for ever. I need not be instrumental in saving one soul, to defend my life from the charge of uselessness. No—

"If I one soul *improve*, I have not lived in vain!"

Sad, indeed, must be the account of that man who cannot conscientiously say that he has exerted some beneficial influence upon some being with whom he has been associated: with what a faltering step and fainting heart must he descend to the grave! O! how can he appear before his Judge, unappalled, and answer for the improvement of those talents which were intrusted to his care?

I wish to feel that I am in the path of duty, that I may "have always a conscience void of offence;" I would constantly have the consolations of God's grace, which are "neither few nor small." I am well assured that the minister of the gospel must have trials and difficulties

which do not fall to the lot of other men ; he must expect hours of gloom and sorrow when no ray of earthly hope shall pierce his soul, and no beam of earthly joy light up the dark scenery around him. At such times he needs a firm hold on heaven, and an unshaken confidence in his God ; nothing else can support him and clothe his countenance with smiles ; nothing else can make him resigned in his afflictions, and prepare him to *give his account with joy*. Surely he who engages in the holy ministry does it at the peril of his immortal soul ! Let him, then, count well the cost, and see whether he can pay it. Let him remember, that if the final result of his labours shall show that he rushed uncalled into the field, it will also show that he has with his own hands barred the gates of heaven against himself ! How awful must it be to be sent from the pulpit to hell !—to leave this world in the character of an “ambassador for Christ,” and to appear in the other as a servant of the devil ! The wailings of a damned spirit must always be indescribably awful ; but how much more so when coming from one who, when on earth, endeavoured to warn others, and induce them to join in the songs of angels ! For my own part, I cannot but view this subject with solemnity ; I cannot think of it but with deep emotions of soul. I am willing to engage in the cause of Christ as a minister, and to make every sacrifice for its advancement ; I am willing to stake upon it all that I love, and all that I value upon earth. Upon it all the energies of my soul are concentrated, and I am ready to go forward. But I want more confidence in God, more piety of heart, more evidence of the reality of my call.

I rejoice that, in reviewing the past and recurring to the days of my childhood, you feel yourselves at liberty to call me “a dutiful son.” This surely is one of the greatest consolations I can have. I have endeavoured for some time past to perform all the duties devolving on me,

but how far short I have come is best known to God. I feel, however, a great satisfaction in knowing that I have tried to do right.

TO HIS BROTHER.

Lynn, April 11, 1834.

MY DEAR BROTHER ELIJAH,—Your kind and very interesting letter of the 26th ult. was received on the 28th, and read with great pleasure. I had concluded that I should not hear from you again till my return home, and of course was disappointed, and, as you may rightly suppose, agreeably so. It did not cost me so much trouble to get your letter as it did you to obtain mine; I think I would not have waddled through the mud twice to pay 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ cents for such a poor thing as mine was. This, however, was your misfortune.

Quite a compliment you pay me for my “neat apology” for the want of interest in my last; pray, brother, where did you learn to pass jokes? How long an apprenticeship did you serve? I don’t remember what that “neat apology” was, and therefore shall not make one at this time, lest it should be only a repetition. To be honest, I think you succeeded very well in making a proem to your epistle, and you will no doubt thank me for giving you the opportunity. I hate this apologizing in the beginning of a letter, however, and will not practise it longer. I am not much in a writing mood, to be sure, but then, if my letter have any merits, Elijah will perceive and appreciate them; if it have none, it is as well for me to say nothing about it.

I recollect that when you have written to me from Lynn, you have descanted largely on the delights of home. Now, ’tis not so plain that I can succeed as well as you have done, but I’m going to try it. Don’t laugh,

now, for 'tis no laughing matter. Well then, dear brother, after a tiresome examination and a sound sleep, I started for home on the morning of the 4th instant, and, through the goodness of God, arrived safely in the evening. I found our dear parents as glad to see me as they ever before were. I took off my hat and cloak, and right glad was I to seat myself in our well-remembered sitting-room. I soon found that the smiling countenances of those who are so dear to us possess a magic charm in alleviating the pains with which these bodies are so often afflicted, and in banishing that fatigue which so effectually mars our enjoyment. There is something passing fair in the artless glance of friendship, and in the expression of the eye which beams with affection; there is something in them which can cause the mourner to wipe away his tears, and the wanderer to banish his complaints. O! they tell of a soul within which not only participates in joy, but sympathizes in grief; they tell of something too pure to spring from the clods of selfishness and sorrow, and point us to a brighter region whence they derived their origin. They prove that something yet remains to show man's lofty descent and high destiny; and while they lead us to deplore his fall, they teach us to admire what few traces of his original glory are left. They lead us to hope for an era, when time shall have ended her journey, and lain down amid the ruins of the universe, when the soul shall expand in a region suited to its nature. O! how cheering to look beyond the skies to realms of bliss, to forget the sigh of despondency and the anguish of grief, to turn away from suffering and sorrow, and gaze on joy fair as an angel's smile, and enduring as the throne of Jehovah. How little of joy do we experience in a world whose every gale breathes the sad notes of grief; whose fountains of happiness are tainted with sin, and whose streams are poisoned by misery and death! Were it not for home,

the sacred asylum of love and the fond retreat of innocence, we should be utter strangers to every thing which bears a semblance to celestial joy ; we should not have powers sufficient to imagine some remote place in the boundless universe of God where sorrow would never intrude. But ah ! blessed as we are with facilities for the exercise of the imagination, we are lost in endeavouring to fathom the joys of heaven. O ! if there be any thing which shows the degeneracy of man, it is the feebleness of his intellectual, and the disease of his moral powers.

When I look upon the world I wonder at its folly ; it uses every means to entice man from the path of duty, and it is, alas, too often successful ; but the wretched beings who are enticed, are deceived by outward appearances, and, when once deceived, press forward in frantic rage after something to satisfy their wants, and make amends for past disappointment. The great cause of wonder however is, that men are continually devising new schemes of pleasure, and promising themselves new sources of happiness, though well assured that they must all end in vanity and vexation of spirit. Indeed, my dear brother, the whole history of the world up to the present moment has been a *reductio ad absurdum* ; and such it must continue to be till God shall change the nature of his government, or till the world, laying aside its wickedness and giving up its enmity, shall consent to do as God commands. O ! how foolish that this world, which has been formed by God, should rebel against him ; that this world, which is upheld in existence by the power of its Creator, should refuse to acknowledge his power, and be grateful for his kindness ! How strange that a world, which voluntarily involved itself in the eternal consequences of guilt—consequences more awful than man can conceive—that a world which has been redeemed by the

Son of God without its even asking for mercy, or putting forth one effort to avert the storm of wrath, should, after all, refuse to look to the Saviour for instruction. And since a glorious way to eternal life has been opened through a region which was pregnant with death, since the light of heaven shines upon it with more than earthly splendour, how passing strange that this world, lifted up in proud conceit of its own wisdom, should refuse to walk in that way! But so it is, my brother; it is stubborn, undeniable fact. We are in so foolish and wicked a world; but God grant it may be the better for our existence. We have a great work to do in it; we must not only flee its snares and withstand its allurements, but must also wage an open and exterminating war with all its vices. Our Master never intended that we should pass through the world without exerting some influence upon it; without leaving upon it the impress of our own hands. He hath also so constituted us that our influence cannot be neutral, but must tell either in favour of virtue or of vice; it must cause either sorrow or joy in the breasts of the damned in hell! What say you, brother, are you ready for the contest? True, it will be a desperate one; we may be wounded in the very first attack, and we *must* fall in the struggle. But what of this? God shall fight with us, and we shall fight for him; the contest will be glorious, and the reward eternal!

The events of the last term were, as you will readily suppose, of an unusually interesting nature. True, the revival of religion took place among another sect of the disciples of Jesus than that to which we belong; yet when God comes forth in his power and glory to open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf, all those minor distinctions which men make disappear as the morning dew. Then

“Names, and sects, and parties fall;”

then the mind is elevated to contemplations of a glorious character ; it leaves the opinions of men, and repairs to the source of wisdom ; it grows dissatisfied with things of earth, and pants for the fulness of Him who is " all in all." God knows but one distinction among men—all are saints or sinners ; or, to express the sentiment in the glowing words of the poet,—

" Earth makes distinctions which Heaven laughs to scorn."

During the revival we have good reason to believe that about twenty-nine students were gathered into the fold of Christ ; my own class shared largely in the grace of God. It was not the dull student who turned from his sins, but the active and the talented ; indeed " the flower" of the irreligious part of our number were hopefully converted. It was glorious, I assure you, my brother, to see my classmates and fellow-students humbling themselves before God, repenting of their sins and submitting to Christ ; it was surprising to see the power of God manifested in their humility and eagerness to be taught the way of truth. The skeptic renounced his infidelity, and the proud his self-righteousness. There was, however, no undue excitement ; the enemies of the cause acknowledged that they could not reproach us with this ; every thing was done with moderation and solemnity, and awe seemed especially to rest upon us. When the calm hour of evening arrived, you might hear the voice of supplication and prayer ascending from many a room which had before resounded with the loud laugh and the licentious jest. O ! how much of heaven seemed to be concentrated in a place which was before a stranger to such scenes of piety and love. And when the bell called us together to unite in worship, O ! how good it was to hear the once bold blasphemer tell of love divine and heaven begun on earth ; then the sinner trembled, and the Christian prayed ; then

the song of praise arose from lips which ne'er before had lisped the Saviour's love. Those were glorious times ; how gladly would I dwell upon them, and labour to describe their blessedness ; but time would fail me.

Mrs. W., wife of our president, died on the evening of my departure from Providence ; she had been sick for several weeks, and her death was not unexpected. She was very pious, and has doubtless gone home to glory. When all hope of her recovery had failed, Dr. W. was almost inconsolable ; he kept his room, and spent the time in praying, and reading the word of God. It was affecting to see a man like him, a man who could grapple with difficulties, and toil, and suffering, weeping at the prospect of bereavement ; and O ! how well it showed that the greatest minds are the most sensitive, the most feelingly awake to sorrow. On the evening of her death, however, and for many days previous, he was resigned and composed ; his own words were, " My trust is in God."

Rest assured, my dear brother, we remember you with much affection ; you hold a warm place in our hearts, and ever will while they beat with life ; we cannot forget you if we would, and we would not if we could. We remember you in the laughing circle of joy, and in scenes of solitude and silence ; we remember you at early morn, and at closing day. We remember you at the throne of grace, and implore Heaven's richest blessings to rest upon you. * * *

Excuse mistakes, and believe me to be, as ever, dear brother, your affectionate

WELLS.

TO HIS PARENTS.

Randolph, Mass., July 13, 1835.

I suppose, my dear parents, you will not think it strange when I tell you, my thoughts often revert to home ; my mind often, very often, fastens itself upon those endearments which render it so lovely, and clings with tenacity to the remembrance of the kindness and affection of the few who will never forget their Wells. You know me too well to think that I shall ever forget you, ever cease to love you ; and I hope you will still believe that, wherever my wanderings on earth may lead me, my eye will always be directed toward the home of my childhood ; my father's house shall be the first object on which my vision shall rest with satisfaction as I wind my way toward it, and it shall be the last from which I will withdraw it with pain as I leave you. "Leave you"—Yes, I must say so, it has been already done. Yes, I am now upon the ocean, and there is no return ; I have really taken a final leave of home, for from henceforth the wide world must be my home. True, I hope often to visit you, but I must as often bid you adieu. O ! my parents, is it so ? Has Wells left his home no longer to be to him an *abiding* resting place ? Yes, you answer me, unless Providence otherwise order. Well then, let us be calm about it—let us not murmur, for such is life. We have lived together long and happily—far longer, far more happily than mortals usually.

TO HIS BROTHER.

Randolph, September 25, 1835.

I cannot, dear brother, describe the feelings which agitated my breast when I gazed upon your very pale countenance as I returned home. So different was your appearance from what I expected to find it, that I was

really horror-struck ; in spite of all my efforts, the big tears filled my eyes, and would fain have rolled in torrents down my cheeks. I really, for a few moments, repented that I had returned ; the scene was so changed, that it seemed to me I could not endure it. That deathly paleness was so different from the roses which my imagination had painted on the cheeks of my brother, that my eyes could scarcely look upon it. But hope, that sweet, heavenly messenger, soon smiled upon me ; I dried up my tears, and from my soul rejoiced in the privilege of seeing my brother, and of endeavouring to add to his comforts. O yes ! dear brother, it is a privilege to behold our friends, however changed may be the circumstances of their existence ; a brother's heart is still a brother's heart, with all its warm affections, whether it beat in a vigorous or a sickly body, whether its earthly receptacle be clothed with the splendour of wealth or the rags of poverty. Affection is ever the same amid all the changes which the beings that cherish it undergo in passing from the cradle to the grave ; it may sometimes fasten itself on unworthy objects, and be compelled to relinquish its hold, but it is still the same in its nature and tendencies.

My visit was a very pleasant one, though the thought of your sickness rushed in upon my mind in my happiest moments, and subtracted much from my enjoyments ; indeed, it gave to them all a pensiveness which excluded every thing like gayety ; it caused a feverish restlessness, which told of something of sorrow even in joy. For the first time I began to reflect upon *the probability* of your decline and death ; I had before considered the possibility of such an event, but not the probability. I need not describe the painful feelings which such a reflection caused. My brother believes I love him tenderly, and should weep bitterly were he taken from me ; he knows I should be a "real mourner," if real mourners there are on earth. Why

then stop to tell my feelings to him? I could not help weeping several times as I thought of you, and even Mary Ann has borne witness to my tears. And I wept on my way hither, and have wept since I arrived here. But this is all wrong, brother, and I am trying to correct it. You may be restored to health again, as many others have been, and live long on the earth to win souls to Christ; yes, you may live to bury me. And suppose what I fear should take place, I ought not to murmur, nor give way to my feelings so as to unfit me for the duties of life; for God, *our heavenly FATHER*, orders all things in mercy toward us. That special providence which numbers even the hairs of our heads surely does not overlook the moments of our lives. Our days are numbered not by blind fate, but by a kind and all-wise God. And I fondly hope, dear brother, that you are prepared even for the hour of death; that, should it be the will of God to call you hence, you have a good hope through grace of entering into "the promised land," there to enjoy the immediate presence of that Redeemer "whom having not seen, you love." O yes! I trust that every day your assurance of a blessed immortality grows stronger, so that you can even now say with the apostle, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I trust you feel that though to live would be Christ, yet to die would be gain. O! my brother, still "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved [you,] and gave himself for [you;]" your conflict has not yet passed, therefore still "watch and pray." Should God see fit to call you hence, I wish to be with you, to behold you dying in the full triumph of Christian faith; I wish to follow you as far as human vision can, and then I'll believe that Mary meets you and conducts you home. But hold—I have said too much on this subject.

Think not, dear brother, that I have "given you up," because I have said so much of dying; you know I love to converse on this topic; I court familiarity with it, that when death shall visit me I may treat him not as a stranger, but as an acquaintance. Happy will it be for us if his visit do not alarm us; thrice happy if we can consider him as a friend. Instead of giving you up, my brother, I hope your health will be fully restored; still I cannot but feel that there is a fearful uncertainty brooding over your case, and I wish that we all may be prepared to do and to suffer all God's holy will. But I'll leave this whole subject for the present, hoping that, before I shall write to you again, your health may be so fully restored that I shall revert to it with far different feelings. Yes, dear brother, God grant that when we meet again we may look back upon your present illness as the sailor looks back upon the rock which he has safely though narrowly escaped; and may the retrospect produce watchfulness, carefulness, and gratitude.

You are aware, Elijah, that my situation here is not a very pleasant one; there seems to me but little probability of my being useful. The church appears to desire popularity more than holiness; it seems anxious to gain accessions from such as are rich in this world's goods, rather than from those who are "poor in spirit." Rachel said, "Give me children, or else I die." Children were given her, and she died in child-birth; thus what she thought could alone perpetuate her life, caused her death. I think my people say in their hearts, (as I cannot but think they say by their conduct,) "Give us a rich society, or else we die." God may in judgment hear their prayer, and thus they may be destroyed. Sodom was not consumed till Lot had escaped its confines. I do not indeed possess the piety of Lot, but still I hope not to be destroyed, even if my people are to be. I am willing

to labour with them so long as the conference wishes, and think I can make myself contented; yet I desire to witness with mine own eyes the fruits of my labours.

Since I have been engaged in preaching, my religious enjoyments have been greater than before. Still I often fear lest, after having "preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." I feel the need of more piety to make me both useful and happy. I want a more watchful and prayerful spirit; more of a spirit of meekness, charity, and self-sacrifice. I really believe, dear Elijah, that it is harder for ministers to live as they ought, than for private Christians; the former are so continually engaged in sacred things, that they are in danger of losing sight of their solemnity and importance; religion being, as it were, the business of ministers, there is danger lest they think of it as of other business pursuits. Do you not think there is some truth in this? If so, how very careful and prayerful should ministers be! I often try to preach to myself the same sermons I preach to others, and I feel that they produce some good effect upon me. O! pray for me, that I may be instrumental in my own salvation, and in that of many immortal souls.

What a blessed thing it is, my dear Elijah, that we are travelling from earth to glory; the very thought is quite sufficient to buoy us above all trials and afflictions. O! I bless God from my very soul when I reflect, that not only those of our family who have made the cold grave their bed have made heaven their home, but also that those of us who still survive are trying to bend our steps to that blissful land. And I expect we shall all reach it in safety, and there "rejoice, no wand'rer lost, a family in heaven." O! how happy an eternity shall we there spend together! What joy is there in this life if the hope of eternal life be blasted? Why weave the sacred ties of friendship, if death must for ever sever them? Why bind around our

hearts the strong cords of love, if the cords must so soon be broken, and loved ones part for ever? O! it is the thought of immortality that renders the sweets of friendship so fascinating, the ties of affection so endearing. The Christian looks on his friend, the partaker of "like precious faith," and exultingly exclaims, "That which loves now will love for ever." I rejoice that so many of our friends are Christians, but I want them all to become such; let us both labour and pray that they may be, and then we'll be joyful in the hope of meeting them all in glory. O! I have of late felt a very strong desire for the conversion of all our friends, knowing how much religion would increase even their present happiness. How much reason have we to bless God for *our* early conversion!

TO MISS MARY ANN MUDGE, LYNN.

Randolph, October 2, 1835.

Your remarks upon religion were very good, nor were they in the least "tinctured with melancholy." I rejoice that you are blessed with deep religious feelings which influence your daily conduct, and that your principal happiness results from piety of heart. Never think, my dear Mary Ann, that you shall weary me by conversing on religious subjects, or that I shall ever grow tired in reading details of your religious experience. The most valuable knowledge you can ever communicate is respecting your growth in grace; the best news you can tell is respecting your religious enjoyments. O that your whole family were partakers of the grace of life! I have of late felt a wonderful desire for the conversion of your father and brother, and have tried to breathe forth that desire in prayer. I love them too well to behold them with indifference, living without the comforts of religion. O that they would be persuaded to "taste and see that the Lord

is good!" Mary Ann, can you not summon up resolution enough to converse with them on the subject? Methinks they would not turn a deaf ear to your affectionate entreaties. They must by and by part with us, and we must part with them, to meet not again "till the heavens be no more;" and what can render that parting scene tolerable but the fond anticipation of meeting, to part not again, in glory? And can we now cherish this anticipation, and derive from it those pleasures which it always adds even to present enjoyments? The ties which bind us to them are strong, and must the grave for ever sever them? O! tell me they are Christians, and I forbear all further inquiries. Let me but know they love the Saviour, and I will rest in hope of greeting them with joy on the shores of eternal deliverance. But till then this poor heart cannot cease from anxiety. O! my dear Mary Ann, can it be indeed true that we are Christians? Shall *we* "wear the white robe and the victor's crown?" Shall *we* be the associates of angels, the companions of cherubim? Shall *we* be like the Saviour? like him in purity, in happiness, in glory? O my poor soul, how canst thou bear the thought of so much felicity? Why are not all thy faculties destroyed, when thou reflectest on this "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" Why, O! why dost thou not incessantly break forth into rapturous songs of praise?

TO THE SAME.

Salem, December 31, 1835.

How painful, my dear Mary Ann, to reflect that this is the last day of the present year! When a few more moments shall have passed away, the shades of evening will gather in around us, and form the pall in which the old year will be wrapped in quiet and eternal repose. Few will behold its burial except the silent moon and twinkling

stars, and none will sing the mournful dirge or perform the funeral rites.

O ! how much of suffering has it witnessed in its silent course ; how many tears has it beheld, how many sighs and groans has it heard ! It has gazed on earthquake shocks, on battle fields and pestilential plains ; on helpless orphans, disconsolate husbands, and mourning widows. It has seen rent asunder the dearest ties which bind the heart to earth, and been an unmoved spectator of the destruction of life's fairest hopes and sweetest joys.

How much of joy has it beheld in new-made ties of friendship, in hearts lately warmed by affection's kindling beams, in the endearments of the social circle, and in the never-failing delights of pure religion ! Familiar hath it been with every form of happiness and wo. And O ! on how many immortal souls has it seen stamped their endless destiny ! How many has it seen carried by angels' wings to heaven, how many dragged by demons to hell ! Has one year witnessed all this ? Ay, more ; language fails to describe, and the soul to conceive, the half of one short year's events. What varied emotions, then, must fill the soul when pausing to look back upon it !

Let us review our own lives during the past year. O ! how much cause for joy and gratitude, for sorrow and repentance. How unfaithful have we been in the cause of God, and how little have we grown in grace ! I trust that you have not been so negligent as your Wells ; but, at the best, how long and sad is the account of our unfaithfulness !

How full of mercy and loving kindness has the year been to us ! No wasting disease has enfeebled our bodies. We have not been called to follow our dear friends to the grave, nor to weep over their despairing death-beds. Though we have not rejoiced over the conversion of some of them, we have not despaired of it, nor have we sat

down to mourn in hopeless grief. Poverty, with its evils, has been to us a stranger ; insanity, with its despondency and frenzy, has been far from us. The endearments of social life have clustered around us, and affection has shed its mild radiance upon our path. Religion has restrained us from outbreking sins and spread joy through our souls, and bright visions of heaven have cheered us amid all the trials and temptations to which we have been exposed. Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life. Why, my poor soul, art thou not "lost in wonder, love, and praise?" O! let us, my dear Mary Ann, lift up our united thanksgiving to God, and let it be "mingled with penitent tears." 'Tis meet we should close the dying year with some act of pious devotion, and bid it adieu with holy joy and chastened grief.

But the coming year! What changes will it work in us and in our families? O fearful question! O awful answer! "Thou knowest not what *a day* may bring forth." Cease, vain speculations, hush, idle imaginings! Let us not seek to draw aside the veil which conceals futurity, but calmly wait till all things shall be *present*. Let us hope for the best, and prepare for the worst. Let us be entirely devoted to God, and then "whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's." Then all will be well, whether "storm or sunshine be our earthly lot, bitter or sweet our cup." We may, however, consistently *wish* that the coming year may be as exempt from sorrow, and as full of joy, as the past has been. "Take from my lips," then, my dear Mary Ann, "the wish of happy years." Enjoy for years to come all the sweets of competency, and all the blessings of health; all the delights of social life, all the joys of ardent, reciprocated, constant affection, and all the raptures of pure religion. Enjoy an approving conscience, a reconciled God, and the pleasure of doing good. Enjoy that happiness which would result from

seeing all our mutual friends coming home to God, and becoming happier in body, mind, and estate than ourselves.

TO THE REV. ABEL STEVENS, BOSTON.

Salem, January 7, 1836.

I am very sorry, my dear brother, to hear of your indisposition, but cannot say I am surprised. I really think you labour too arduously; the subjects on which you preach are of the most exciting nature, and calculated to call into vigorous exercise all the faculties of the mind; you speak of them at length, and thus protract a mental excitement which must necessarily prostrate all your physical powers. Indeed, it seems to me that every young man must now pursue such a course to some extent, if he would be greatly instrumental in the hands of God of building up the cause of Christ. The age of cool, dispassionate preaching, has passed away, and an age of excitement has succeeded. Solemn and important truths, unless treated in a bold and imposing manner, produce but little effect on the hearts of men. Many there are who will even sleep when the great tragedy of eternity is rehearsed before them, unless they can almost behold the manifestations of the wrath of God. They will smile when beholding the scene on Calvary, unless he who exhibits it shows an intensity of feeling with which they cannot trifle. They will deliberately ridicule descriptions of future blessedness, unless there be something in them which almost irresistibly arrests their attention; and this *something* must be the result of a lively, but holy imagination, and a deeply feeling heart. Does not your own observation confirm these statements? If so, there is an absolute necessity of natural talent, thorough mental discipline, and ardent piety in all who fight the battles of the Lord; there is need also of *continued* effort, *constant* and *deep* thought, and *daily increasing* zeal and piety. And

what more is necessary, dear brother, to break down these feeble bodies, especially when the demand for such labour will not allow us the requisite rest? He who thus labours ought to lay aside, for a time at least, his mental faculties, and *vegetate*, if he would secure long life.

I wish more of our ministers would realize the demands of the age, and resolve to supply them. O that they would lay aside for ever their skeleton books, and their volumes of printed sermons, and devote their time to deep and patient thought; that they would use commentaries less, and their own brains more! Our congregations would not then so frequently anticipate their preachers in the division of their subjects; there would then be more originality; we should hear "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." The desk would then assume as elevated a station as it held when Paul preached at Athens; men would hang upon the ministrations of the pulpit, and drink in the words of eternal life; and Zion would appear to her enemies, "terrible as an army with banners." But that glorious day has not yet arrived; God grant it may speedily come. Will it come, however, till we shall awake to the emergencies of the times? till we shall be willing to devote our all to the work, and "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty?" Yet after all we must be as careful of our health as possible. I know of but one course to take—when we preach, to do it with all our might, but *not to preach too frequently*. 'Tis better to preach one warm, well-digested sermon, than a dozen cold "milk and water" ones. Let me then beg you, my dear brother, not to preach too frequently. Bishop Hedding and brother Otheman have instructed me on no occasion to preach more than twice a day, and I have always obeyed.

I rejoice very much, dear brother, in your success in the ministry, and in the recent outpouring of the Spirit

upon yourself and church. It must surely greatly encourage and quicken ministers to see the Lord blessing their humble efforts. In this respect you have been highly favoured. I once thought I might be proud should God make me instrumental in the conversion of many souls, but my views of late have been changed; nothing, I believe, would more tend to humble me. God has blessed my efforts here in the conversion of a few souls; seven or eight have been hopefully converted, and some are now serious; still there is great need of a revival. The long and harassing difficulties with which this church has been perplexed have been to her enemies an occasion of reproach, and to her own members (apparently at least) a curse. Whether the day of her deliverance will ever come, God only knows; but if it come at all, we may reasonably believe it hath already dawned upon her. Her night hath been long and dubious—may her day be bright and glorious! If in any place on earth we may learn the sad, sad effects of lukewarmness and disunion, we may learn them in the church in Salem. Would to God she might profit by bitter experience! If we would behold the folly of building chapels before prospects warrant it, and of a *settled* ministry in a *travelling* connection, we need only look at Salem. Let us not, however, indulge in censures, but rather learn how *we* may avoid such difficulties. Happy shall we be if, warned by others, we ourselves are not betrayed into similar errors.

I cannot, dear Stevens, speak of religious enjoyments as great as yours, but can say that I believe I am advancing in piety. I feel more and more my own sinfulness, the willingness of God to bless me abundantly, and the preciousness of religion. I want to be the Lord's in life and in death. I have satisfied myself that ambition does not prompt me to effort, and that my motives are such as God approves. The work of the ministry ap-

pears desirable, though arduous and awfully responsible. I am resolved to be more holy, and to labour after a full conformity to the mind of Christ. Still pray for me and the people of my charge, that "Holiness to the Lord" may be inscribed upon us.

TO HIS BROTHER.

Salem, January 12, 1836.

Your details were all very interesting, though they forcibly reminded me of that "bad way you have with you," viz., imprudence; why, my dear brother, will you so often suffer yourself to be led thoughtlessly on to the hazard of colds, and, by consequence, sickness? Recollect that striking sentence quoted in the "Diary of a Physician:"—"A slight cold"—"*omnium prope quibus affligimur morborum origo et quasi semen.*" Your colds are peculiarly to be feared, for they speak the language of death—*early, premature death*; they utter their solemn warnings in the hollow, prophetic cough! They point us, your dear friends at home, to the turf which covers the cold, mouldering remains of a once lovely and beloved Mary! They point significantly too, and sometimes almost succeed in telling us, that we may soon be called to mark the lonely resting-place of another, and almost the last branch of our bereaved family. And O! dear brother, a melancholy reflection it is which now rests heavily on my mind, and which I hardly dare express. The thought of these death-like coughs sometimes causes us to fear that we may go to *our* grave-yard in vain to search after the relics of Elijah, for they may turn to dust in "foreign parts." Let not any, even the slightest imprudence, make your resting-place *the stranger's grave*, to which our affection may never bring the simple but touching tribute of tears! Whenever you are tempted to be incautious, think of your friends! Dear brother, regard

our love, and let it speak through every whistling wind, every gentle rain ; let it show itself in the clouds of noon-day, and in the vapours of twilight. You may, by the use of those means which Providence has afforded you, by prudence and the blessing of God, be again restored to perfect health. For this you hardly need be assured we all daily pray. But if the boon be in mercy denied us and you, still we would receive an answer to our further petition—a petition which affection for you, as well as regard for ourselves, prompts us to offer the Father of mercies—“ *May you die among your kindred !*” There is in this case, brother, another agency between us and God : it is your carefulness. We appeal, then, with great propriety to you, and ask, in the language of affection, Will that agency be propitious ? We know your answer ; for there is a cord which binds together kindred souls, and which vibrates to all their feelings.

We were very glad to hear of your kind reception among the Methodists at the south ; it must be a great source of comfort to you, while exiled from the dear ones of home, to find kind and warm friends in the stopping-places of your pilgrimage :—

“ The thread of your life would be dark, Heaven knows,
Were it not for friendship and love intertwined.”

May friends multiply around you in every step of your wanderings ; and may the flowing streams of gratitude, as they gush forth from the deep fountains of your heart, but add fresh life to all their kindness ! How is it, brother, do strangers share in “ Christmas gifts ?” I sometimes wish that I were rich, that I might experience the happiness of *conferring* favours : and

“ The quality of mercy is not strain’d ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless’d ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.”

I suppose the various circumstances in which you are placed give you full scope to gratify your favourite propensity of paying special attention to children. Well, scatter blessings in your path. Strive to enjoy yourself as well as you can, and remember you are the child of many prayers.

TO THE SAME.

Salem, February 6, 1836.

Our happiness much depends not only upon the possession of friends, but upon being permitted to live near them, and enjoy the endearments of social life ; yet we little realize this till separated from each other. To the Christian, however, there is much consolation in the reflection that his Saviour is an omnipresent being, knowing no separation from his people which material objects can cause ; that to him he may go in every varying circumstance of life, and express the desires of his inmost soul ; that to his merciful protection he may commit all his interests, and to his constant and unearthly love commend the objects of his affection. How consoling to think that the Saviour sympathizes in our sufferings, and makes them tolerable by the kind assurance that they work together for our good ! Never, then, dear brother, give way to despondency while you claim for your friend an omniscient and omnipresent being ; never imagine yourself *alone* in your wanderings, while he directs and accompanies you ; never murmur, since you know that for you he bore sufferings the most extreme, even the wrath of an offended God !

I love to dwell upon the retrospect of our past interviews, though it is as the music of Carril, "like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul." Our lives have been much like a dream since we left college ; they have been short, but momentous ; the

scenes they have witnessed have changed as rapidly as the fleeting visions of the night. It is upon this portion of our career that I love to linger; you have seen me at one time a student, and then a minister of the gospel, wielding the delegated power of God's servant; and thus have I seen my brother. I have looked upon him as no unimportant actor on the stage of life; but alas! I have seen the curtain fall, and have retired within the scenes to see him prostrated on a bed of sickness. . . . I sometimes fear, dear Elijah, that we have taken our last leave of each other, and that I shall see your face on earth no more. In troubled dreams have I seen you wan and emaciated, and night's couriers have even brought to my ears the tidings of your untimely end; and then, O! then our parting hour heaves full in view its scene of fraternal woe, its stifled feelings, its suppressed sighs, its forbidden tears. But I will not augment feelings already excited, but rather leave this topic by again commending you to the protection of an ever watchful Providence.

I sympathize with you, dear brother, in your affliction, and especially in the subdued grief which an abandonment of your holy calling must cause. To be thus suddenly removed from the walls of Zion must appear to you mysterious and painful. We hoped that your health would be strong enough to endure the toils of the watchman's station, that your constitution would grow firmer under hardships, and that you might rise high in the esteem of God and man; all this, and more, was the desire of your friends. Providence, however, seems slow in granting our desires, and instead thereof has appointed your lot among those who travel in search of lost health. To *me* this affliction is perhaps doubly trying, since I had expected much from having a brother in the same field of labour, whose principles and plans were inseparable from mine, being matured under a father's roof in the same

hour of trial and deep resolve. . . . Again, your affliction is very grievous to me, not only because a brother's heart is touched with keenest sorrow, but also because your fate may be prophetic of my own. I try to be very careful, but still labour causes great prostration; my health is, however, pretty good, and, so far as I am capable of judging, my lungs are as tough as leather! The difficulty which I fear most is mental excitement. Yet God can spare me as long as he sees best; he may have suspended you for a season only, to increase your usefulness. But, dear brother, don't preach till your cough and hemorrhage have gone; I think you were imprudent in preaching so soon; I will not, however, write a lecture on this subject, as I gave you a long one in my letter of January 12th, by which I fondly hope you will greatly profit. Don't pass it over as an occasional performance, but reduce it all to *immediate practice*.

I am not captivated with Mr. C.'s manner of preaching; think him theatrical. But he has been the instrument of much good, and I esteem him for his talents and piety. He is a zealot in the best sense of the word, and to this fact may be justly ascribed his popularity. Notwithstanding man's depravity, if he go to church at all, he will go where he can *feel* something; hence warm-hearted, zealous speakers, are generally popular.

"Ut ridentibus arident, ita flentibus adflent
Humani vultus."

TO THE SAME.

Salem, March 10, 1836.

I realize that it is not a blind and unrelenting fate which separates kindred and friends, but a kind and watchful Providence.

"There's a divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we may."

That same Providence will bring us together again if we submit implicitly to its directions ; we may not meet on the shores of time, but we shall in the "spirit-land." I take sweet pleasure of late in my full belief in an overruling Providence ; I can often say that I rejoice in trials, and sorrows, and sufferings, for by faith's piercing eye I see their gracious design ; I watch their varied operations, and see sometimes their blessed results. I thank God that he has made a dispensation through the blood of his dear Son, in which trials operate as the refiner's fire ; in which sorrows act as causes to produce glorious effects ; and in which sufferings lose their bitterness in the sweets which they distil. The idea of probation is a sad insinuation against man's moral character, but it gives wide scope to infer glorious things respecting the character of our God ; it is a doleful chorus to the songs of time, but it will be a sweet symphony in the pealing chants of eternity.

TO THE REV. ABEL STEVENS.

Salem, May 14, 1836.

'Tis now Saturday morning ; the work of preparation for the sabbath is nearly completed, but my mind is not in the happy frame I could wish. Our long conversation at Holliston has, however, afforded me both instruction and consolation, and I believe it has been the means of leading me to entertain new and delightful views of God when I bow before him in prayer. I can frequently realize him in the character of a kind Father, and feel a perfect freeness in unbosoming myself to him, and in hanging upon his almighty arm. Still I very much doubt whether I shall ever on earth possess the feelings which you so vividly describe as your own, for I still believe that constitutional differences in the mental powers affect our religious as well as our earthly enjoyments ; and while I

would congratulate you on the attainments which you have made and are still making in holiness, I too would press forward to obtain all the mind that was in Christ Jesus. I trust I am serving God from principle, and with the assistance of his grace I would persevere in his service, though no spark of enjoyment should be given me in the whole course of my pilgrimage. I would follow Christ, though every step of my progress should be marked by my blood. A crown of righteousness will be an ample compensation for every suffering, and the sight of Jesus as he is will banish for ever the remembrance of all earthly afflictions. How admirably calculated are visions of eternity to reconcile us to the storms of time, to wean our affections from earth, and to make us willing at any moment to depart and "be ever with the Lord."

I am trying, brother, to be as careful as possible in regard to my health, studies, &c. I *do not* write my sermons; I write only a full analysis. You seem to have supposed that all my sermons are written and committed. Let me tell you, my good brother, I have not written out a sermon for more than a year. I intend, however, to write several this summer, if health and time permit.

TO THE SAME.

Salem, July 1, 1836.

I rejoice, my brother, in the thought that I am engaged in the ministry of Christ. Notwithstanding the many difficulties which I find within and without, the awful weight of responsibility which I feel resting on me, and the many toils and sufferings inseparably connected with the ministry, I wish to continue therein. I would not, unless circumstances should render it absolutely necessary, give up the cause for all the world. There is such joy arising from the consciousness of discharging duty, and from beholding its effects in the conversion of immor-

tal souls, that it more than outbalances all the suffering. There are such sweet anticipations of the blessedness of that day when we shall have finished our embassy, and returned our commission, that the soul feels itself perfectly happy. And there are often such bright visions of glory, that we feel willing to be "strangers and pilgrims on the earth"—willing to encounter one dark and continued storm, if at last the unclouded sunshine of heaven may break in upon our spirits. O! how blessed to be a minister of Jesus Christ! Happy am I in his love, and happy do I expect to be to all eternity.

TO THE SAME.

Salem, January 31, 1837.

DEAR BROTHER STEVENS,—After so long a silence, I have seated myself to converse with you for a few minutes; and yet, brother, I am so very weak that it is painful to hold a quill in my hand. About twelve days ago I was very suddenly afflicted with sickness; I cannot tell the nature of my complaint, nor assign any satisfactory cause for it; but I had a very strange and violent cough, and a very severe attack of fever. By the use of medicine and the blessing of God I am now slowly recovering, and hope in a few days to go on in the discharge of my usual duties. I have no disposition to murmur at any of the dispensations of Providence, but I frequently regret that I cannot labour more assiduously in the great vineyard of the Lord, and that this poor body hangs so often like an incubus upon the soul. 'Tis painful now to sit in my room while my flock need my visits, and while some of them are drawing near unto death. But, believing as I do in a special Providence which sometimes orders events, and sometimes permits them, I can bow down in very cheerful submission. Surely he who watches over all

will not permit any thing to befall me which will not, if properly improved, result in my happiness and usefulness. How full of comfort and consolation, my dear brother, is the blessed religion which we have embraced ! How does it guide us in prosperity, and buoy us up in adversity ! To what deeds of noble daring does it nerve these timid souls, and urge us on through fire and flood to our resting-place in the skies ! The love of God burning in the soul is a mightier incentive to exertion than the proudest fires ambition ever kindled. Heaven with its glories is a more enchanting, more alluring vision than imagination ever beheld. O ! I glory in a religion which has such pure and thrilling *stimuli*, such bright and fascinating scenes. I glory in that which thus elevates the soul above its fallen condition, which calls into exercise its slumbering energies, which rekindles its deathless fires, and assimilates it to the image of those spotless spirits who wait around the throne of Infinite Holiness. My longing desires are stretching themselves forward to that glorious period when I shall be permitted to join with them, and when every faculty and every energy shall be constantly and fully exerted in doing the will of God, as it is done in heaven. Blessed be God, these desires may all be satisfied, for sinners shall have access to the holy place when washed in the blood of a crucified Redeemer ! The mantle of a Saviour's righteousness shall introduce its wearer to seraphs and archangels, with them and with his God to hold communion for ever.

February 1.

I am very glad you were favoured with the opportunity of hearing Dr. W. before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge. I do think he is one of the most original and talented men in our country. He has the finest power of description of any man I ever knew. His talent, too, is

sanctified and dedicated to the cause of Christ. Should his life and health be spared, he will yet do very much for the cause of learning and religion. What think you of his delivery? It is very peculiar, but not very fascinating, and yet it is impressive; it always produces great effect upon literary men, perhaps from the fact that its strength is adapted to his style of thinking. There is something in an enlightened and vigorous mind which commands the respect of all men, however diminutively they may speak of intellectual acquirements; what a powerful engine, then, in the hands of piety for revolutionizing a sinful world! God grant that the time may soon come when genius shall be laid upon the altar of religion, and consecrated unreservedly to her service!

February 3.

Yesterday I ventured out to see two of my flock who are on the very borders of the grave; the effort, with the excitement, overcame me, and I was obliged to lie still for the remainder of the day. I have this moment returned from another visit to one of these sick friends, but feel so well that I am resolved to attempt finishing this letter. I love to visit the dying when they feel prepared to go; there is something melting and soothing in the chamber of death which is found nowhere else. There is too something to me so fascinating that I hate to leave the place, but rather feel like bowing down to God, and thanking him for the privilege of dying. I know not how I shall feel when called personally to contend with death; I doubt not that dying will be quite a different thing from what I now deem it; but I expect to depart in peace.

One of the friends of whom I have just spoken is the most talented woman I ever saw. She is a mother, and every earthly prospect told of usefulness and bliss. But O! Consumption, that destroying angel sent forth to cut

down the fairest and loveliest of our race, has blasted all but hopes of happiness in heaven. She was hopefully converted under my labours, and bids fair in a few hours to die in peace.* The other friend too is a Christian, and has long been a member of our church; she too is happy in view of her departure. Brother Stevens, *I feel happy*; for, sinful and unfaithful as I have been, I think I have positive evidence that I have not lived in vain. To reflect that very soon one immortal spirit will enter paradise as a seal of *my poor ministry*, and, if I prove faithful, will be as a star in my crown of rejoicing, O! 'tis glorious! 'tis well nigh overwhelming! My heart cries out, Can it be that God has so richly blessed thee? O! what incentives, drawn from death-bed scenes, and from visions of a future world, urge us on as ministers of the gospel to be faithful in our holy calling!

I sometimes feel quite provoked in drawing near the end of a letter, to think the all-absorbing topic has been *I*. Time will not allow a review of this, but my impression is that it will appear to you very egotistical. Well, my good brother, 'tis too late to amend, and you must make due allowance for that peculiar state of body and mind, which turn's one's thoughts almost entirely upon himself; when I write again I will strive to do better. How do you get along now? How are your health and spirits? Sometimes I hear very favourable news of you, and then again I hear you labour too hard, and are bringing yourself prematurely to the grave. But after all it is to be confessed, I don't fully believe *all* I hear; it will not do to take the face of notes of hand now-a-days; we must make deductions on account of the state of the market. They are prone to tell hard tales of me now and then; some are even bold enough to talk to my face of suicide,

* The first sermon in this volume was preached on the occasion of the death of the individual who is here referred to.—ED.

&c. And yet the sober truth is, dear Stevens, that without labour, hard and persevering, nothing can be accomplished. So far as excessive toil is concerned, I am willing to answer at a higher bar than that of public opinion. I wish from my soul that no harder charge than this could be brought against me. But *I* think of misspent hours, of time wasted upon trifles, and squandered away in idle day-dreamings. What think you of the business transactions of the day? the "fine speculations," exorbitant profits, combinations for raising the price of provisions, and reducing the price of labour? Ought not the pulpit to thunder against them, rather than connive at them? Ought it not to specify *them as sins*? Ought it not more than ever to warn men against the love of money? I think so, and act accordingly. I enjoy much in preaching the truth, and some of the Salem aristocracy call me *radical*; but they don't say I am more so than the Bible.

TO THE SAME.

Salem, Oct. 19, 1837.

I was in hopes you would have finished your tour in season to be present at the commencement of Brown University. At the solicitation of some of my friends, rather than from the promptings of my own inclination, I visited my Alma Mater on that occasion, and took the second degree; but I really don't see that I am any more honourable than I was before, nor did the cumbrous load add any thing to my bodily weight. I cannot grow fleshy, and don't see but I must wear leaden shoes, if I would weigh more in the scale of existence.

My health is nearly the same as when I last saw you and I am fully convinced that if I continue studying and preaching as at present, (and how can I do otherwise?) it will never be much improved. It has been poor for seven years at least. I study no more than my age and

my calling require, and feel fully satisfied that I shall never fall a victim to unhallowed ambition.

For some time past, dear brother, I have taken sweet enjoyment in the service and love of God. Religion never seemed sweeter to me than at present. I want to live wholly to God, and become perfectly conformed to the image of my adorable Redeemer. My prayers seem very often to enter the ears of my Father, and his blessings distil upon me like the evening dew. O! what is there like religion? what like living by faith? May God help us both to be faithful and holy, and take us at last to heaven!

TO MISS MARY ANN MUDGE.

Salem, December 9, 1837.

How happy they whom Providence has brought together to share each other's friendship and affection! And yet how few realize that Providence has had any thing to do in the disposing of their lot,—in the mingling of that cup of earthly comfort which is pressed to their lips! Let us acknowledge God in all our ways, and he will direct our steps.

I am very glad, my dear Mary Ann, that I can write to you at this time, for I wish to converse plainly with you on some subjects on which I frequently feel unwilling to trust my lips. You too will reflect upon them in a different way, as the sound of my voice will not interrupt your meditations. I doubt not you have frequently reflected upon your future lot, and in full view of it, have decided both upon the way of duty and the path of pleasure. But never is it amiss to review the ground over which we have passed and decide anew upon the course which we

More than ever, Mary Ann, am I convinced that the life of a minister is one of hardship and toil, and that his companion must expect privations and sufferings. No mere earthly consideration could reconcile me to the thought of leading such a life, or of permitting one whom I so tenderly love to share with me in its sorrows. What can I expect as my portion here but labour and sacrifice? What better can I expect for the friend of my bosom? I am the professed ambassador of that Saviour whom this world hates, and whom it once crucified; the servant of that God against whom earth has risen up in proud rebellion. Can I suppose that the world will smile upon me? that upon me it will lavish its favours? O no! the servant is not above his Lord. If I am faithful to my Master, devoted to his cause, the world must hate me. And O! it hath a thousand ways of manifesting its cruel hatred. The best that can be looked for is, that it will only crown me with thorns. True, the blessed Saviour has his friends even in an enemy's land; he has a church established, which shall finally triumph over all opposition. But this church often fails to uphold and protect its ministers; benumbed by selfishness and sin, it sometimes forgets them, and suffers them to falter and die. Have you not, Mary Ann, seen with your own eyes enough to convince you of the truth of these remarks? Can you wonder then that I dare not look at this world, lest my heart should faint within me? Can you be surprised that I so often beg you to consider, how much your affection for me will cost you? how large the price which you must pay in acts of self-denial? Cruel indeed should I be, did I not frankly tell you all: strange would be that affection which would

I have tried to count well the cost of my course, and I hasten onward to finish it with joy. I believe that God has called me to preach the gospel, that he will abundantly bless my labours, and finally reward me. I have no desire to engage in any other work, but wish ever to be found preaching "Christ crucified." With divine assistance, I am resolved to be "faithful unto death," to make every necessary sacrifice without a sigh, and to *count not my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy*. I look to heaven, and see enough there fully to reconcile me to all that I must suffer. I muse upon eternity, and O! its boundless duration, its untold riches, its inconceivable joys, allure me to duty. This, Mary Ann, is the bright side! Thank God, there is a bright side to this picture—so bright that not all the shades of earth and sin can darken it. Say, my dear Mary Ann, does it seem equally bright to *you*? Does it reconcile *you* to all that is discouraging and gloomy in the path before you? Does it prompt you to walk in this path, though so thickly strewn with thorns? O say, does the voice of duty chime with that of affection? Does the voice of heaven harmonize with the language of love? But why should I

the discharge of my arduous duties. And yet I do not know that I ever before could say with deeper emotion, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child." When I reflect that men are greatly influenced by first impressions, and that these impressions may be unfavourable to me, I can hardly find courage to put forth my first efforts. But I remember that God sees all my feelings, and knows all my wants; that he will take care of me, if I will but rely on his protection, and will give me that kind and degree of favour in the eyes of Israel which will best promote his own glorious cause. O that I may ever be found at the cross, receiving instruction from my blessed Redeemer, and drinking in that meek and lowly spirit which will prepare me both to do and to suffer all that may seem good in his sight! You need not be told that such is the prayer which I would beg you, and all my dear friends, to offer in my behalf to the throne of grace. I doubt not that every swiftly passing day witnesses the breathing forth of many prayers for me; but O! that the number and fervour of these petitions might be increased. Who can tell how rich the blessings

they may procure for me, and for my dying fellow-men ! I do prize these prayers, and to my latest hour shall remember with gratitude all who offer them. How often, since my conversion, have I thought that I might have been called to seek the favour of God, in answer to the oft-repeated prayers of a now sainted mother. And O ! if the dear parents whom heaven has still spared (perhaps chiefly for our good) reach "the better land" before me, will they not there be permitted to see, as they never before could have fully conceived, the happy result of *training up a child in the way he should go* ? I would not deprive them of the glorious vision, but since time cannot dim its eternal colours, nor vary its unchanging shades, I would pray that they may still dwell with us, to cheer, and guide, and bless us.

TO MISS SARAH PURBECK, SALEM.*

Boston, August 30, 1838.

MY DEAR MISS PURBECK,—In compliance with your request communicated to me by your cousin Matilda, I write you a word or two to serve as a memento of my past visits to your humble but pleasant habitation. Pleasant indeed has it been to me, for there have I sympathized with the suffering—there have I pitied the af-

* The individual to whom this interesting letter was written is emphatically a daughter of affliction. For the last ten years she has been confined to her bed by an affection of the spine ; during this whole period she has been subject to the most violent convulsions, *nor has she been conscious of one moment's relief from the most excruciating pain.* One who has not visited her can have no just idea of her sufferings, and words cannot describe them. Yet she is patient, resigned, and happy ; the preciousness of Christ is the theme on which she delights at all times to converse, and it is pleasant to be with her, so bright is the manifestation of the Saviour's presence to sustain and comfort her even in the deepest distress.—ED.

flicted—there have I, as I humbly trust, met with our common Lord and Saviour. I have been near you since leaving Salem, but circumstances prevented my calling; no circumstances have, however, prevented my thinking of you with lively emotions of sympathy. I shall forget you only when my pulse shall have ceased to beat my death-march to the grave. God grant that when this defile shall have been passed, we may be marshalled in heavenly order, under the great Captain of our salvation, on the fair plains of eternal deliverance! Be patient, Sarah, and soon you may enter into that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

I have heard of your recent afflictions, and have not forgotten to feel for you. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” May you be a witness of Jehovah’s continued faithfulness and infinite love!

My situation is pleasant, but its duties are very arduous. Often am I at the bed of sickness and in the house of death. But if I may be useful I will not complain. Remember me kindly to your mother and to our friends. But I must leave you to God, and affectionately bid you adieu.

As ever, your friend,

J. W. DOWNING.

TO MR. OLIVER A. MUDGE, NEW-LONDON, CT.

Boston, March 5, 1839.

Permit me to congratulate you most heartily on the change which God’s grace has wrought in your heart. O! it is an untold blessing! Better will it be for us in the hour of death, and better is it now to love God with all our hearts, than to be in possession of all the honours and treasures of earth. These are fleeting, but God’s love is everlasting. Had I time, I would try to give you

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I shall trust myself in a consumption! I shall be very careful, and leave it all with God. I have no heart to worry about it. My speech on the death of Dr. Fisk was made when I was very sick, and I consider it one of my happiest efforts. My labours are very arduous, and I have scarcely a moment which I can call my own; church business, calls, studies, visits, &c., make up a minister's life here. Whether I shall be returned to Boston or not, I cannot tell; such is my state of health, that I should not wonder were I removed. My church are apparently very desirous of my returning, and they would have given me a vacation some time since, had I desired it; but conference will soon sit, and the question will then be settled. . . . But adieu, dear Elijah, and believe me to be as ever and as affectionately your only brother,

WELLS.

THE END.

flicted—there have I, as I humbly trust, met with our common Lord and Saviour. I have been near you since leaving Salem, but circumstances prevented my calling; no circumstances have, however, prevented my thinking of you with lively emotions of sympathy. I shall forget you only when my pulse shall have ceased to beat my death-march to the grave. God grant that when this defile shall have been passed, we may be marshalled in heavenly order, under the great Captain of our salvation, on the fair plains of eternal deliverance! Be patient, Sarah, and soon you may enter into that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

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